



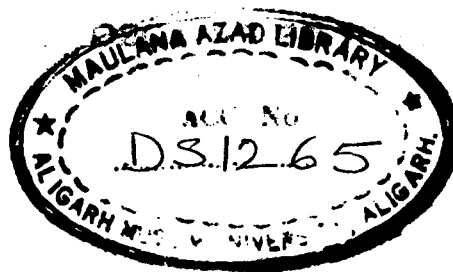
# **A Critical Study of Ali Shariati's Contribution to Islamic Thought**

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**BY  
AHSANUL HAQ**

**Under the Supervision of  
Professor Mahmudul Haq**

**CENTRE OF WEST ASIAN STUDIES  
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY ALIGARH  
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## INTRODUCTION

Ali Shariati was an eminent thinker of modern Iran. He distinguished himself in many respect from his contemporaries. He was an ideologue as well as an activist. He took active part in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 A.D. He inculcated political as well as religious consciousness among the Iranian people and mobilized them against the tyrannical regime of the Shah.

However, the popularity of Ali Shariati was not confined to Iran alone. He was soon acclaimed as a very important thinker of Islam throughout the Muslim World. His sociological interpretation of Islam, his reformist zeal and radical ideas as well as his profound knowledge go to make him a unique personality of modern Islam.

However, inspite of all this, life and activities of Ali Shariati have not been thoroughly studied so far.<sup>\*</sup> There exists a scanty literature

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\* A list of the works on Ali Shariati is given in the bibliography.

on his personality and his movement. Some of the works mainly discusses his political role, especially his contribution to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, such as Nikki R. Keddie's The Roots of Revolution : An Interpretive History of Modern Iran (New Haven, 1981), Edward Mortimer's Faith and Power : The politics of Islam (London, 1982) and Dr. Abul-Fazl Ezzati's The Revolutionary Islam and the Islamic Revolution (Tehran, 1981) etc. However in these works brief references have been made to his ideas. Attempts have also been made by his close associates and friends to introduce his ideas to the outside world by translating his works in English and other languages. But they are very few. Some of these translations deal with life and work of Ali Shariati albeit briefly. There are also some articles on his ideas such as Soheyl Amini's "Critical Assessment of Ali Shariati's Theory of Revolution" in A. Jabbari (ed.), Iran : Essays on the Revolution in making (Lexington, 1981), Bayat-Philip's "Shiism in contemporary Iranian Politics : The Case Study of Ali Shariati" in E. Kedbourie and S. Heim (eds.), Towards a Modern Iran (London, 1980), Mansoor Farhang's "Resisting the Pharaoh. Ali Shariati on oppression" Race and Class, vol XXI No.1, 1979., and S. Alam Khundmiri's "Mimber as the symbol of Islamic Revolution : A Critical study of Ali Shariati's Radicalism" in Anwar Moazzam (ed.), Islam and Contemporary Muslim World (New Delhi, 1981) etc.

The present study is based on the original writings of Ali Shariati. I have tried to present his ideas and activities objectively and critically in broader perspective.

The dissertation comprises five chapters. The first chapter is a biographical sketch of the man. Efforts have been made to take into consideration the influences and factors which led to the gradual development of his personality and thought. The second chapter not only deals with his important works but also tries to identify authenticity of his writings. The third chapter discusses Ali Shariati's concepts of man and ethics or 'Islamic humanism'. In this Ali Shariati has compared the modern as well as ancient human philosophies including religion with the Islamic concept of man. The fourth chapter deals with his sociological thoughts on Islam and society. As a sociologist, he has tried to discover sociological notions in the Qur'an and other Islamic sources. He also discusses social structure and class system and relates them to the problems of change in society. The fifth chapter is devoted to his ideas on Islam especially his concept of Shiism. He believes that the clergy and monarchy of Iran united to corrupt the Shiite religion to fulfil their vested interest. He then tries to reconstruct the real meaning of Shiism in the context of the present day world. His ideas on some of the basic tenets of Shiism - Ummah, Imamat and Adalat have been critically examined.

I express my gratitude to Professor Mahmudul Haq Director, Centre of West Asian Studies, who supervised this work. I am also grateful to my teachers of the Centre for their help and encouragement. I am thankful to Mr. Sayyid Ahsan, lecturer in the Department of Islamic Studies, for his help and cooperation. My thanks are also due to my friends Nasser Shirazi, Lotfollah Bakhtiari and Ale Mohammad for providing me with some important materials regarding my dissertation.

## CHAPTER - I

### LIFE OF ALI SHARIATI

Ali Shariati was born on<sup>1</sup> 2nd of the Azarmah 1312 A.H. (Solar)/  
23rd of November, 1933 A.D. in a small town, Mazinan, in the country-  
side of the holy city of Mashhad. As per family tradition, he was  
taught initially by his father, a well known theologian himself, at  
home. Later on he was sent to his home town school. He completed  
his primary schooling at Dabistan-i-Ibn-i-Aiman and secondary schooling  
at Dabirishan-i-Firdosi. At the age of seventeen he completed higher

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1 Cf. Zindakinameh Mujahid Shaheed Doctor Ali Shariati (n.p., n.d.) p.1. Another biographer of Ali Shariati Dr. Asghar Ghassemy gives a different date. He gives December 1932 A.D. that corresponds to 9th/10th Month of 1311 A.H. (Solar), thus there is a difference of about one year. (Dr. Asghar Ghassemy, "Ali Shariati" Soroush (Tehran), No. 3 (May, 1981), p. 24.). However, most of the biographers agree on the year 1312 A.H. (Solar) as the year in which Ali Shariati was born. But most of them do not mention the date or month or both and contend to state "one of the days of the year 1312 A.H. (Solar)". See, for example, Yadnameh Doctor Shariati (Mashhad n.d.) Vol. I, p.9.

For other important works of the life of Ali Shariati see Ali Shariati, Kavir (n.p., 1348 A.H. Solar); Islam Maktab-i-Mobarez Special Issue of Ali Shariati (Europe & U.S.A.) Vol. 23; Yadnameh Salgard Hijrat va Shahadat Abu Dharr-i-Zaman (n.p., 1357 A.H. Solar); Gholam Abbas Tavassoli, "Introduction" in Hamid Algar (trs.) On the Sociology of Islam (New Delhi, 1979) pp. 11-34.



secondary education from Mashhad in 1329 A.H. (Solar). Then he was admitted to Teacher's Training Institute in Mashhad for a two years course of Basic Teaching Training. As he was keen to choose teaching profession, he joined a village school as a teacher in Ahmedabad in the suburbs of Mashhad. But within four years he left the job for further education. He came to Mashhad in 1334 A.H. (Solar) and joined the newly established Faculty of Letters in Mashhad University where he got his degree in the first division in 1338 A.H. (Solar)<sup>2</sup>. After graduation his name was recommended by the University authorities for higher studies abroad. He came to Paris to join Sorbonne University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1339 A.H. (Solar).

Ali Shariati belonged to a middle class orthodox family. His family members were renowned for their deep knowledge of Islamic sciences. A number of theologians and religious scientists who were highly esteemed for their scholarship in Iran came from this family. His paternal grandfather, whom he mentions proudly in his autobiographical work "Kavir",<sup>3</sup> was a well known theologian of his time. His name was Akhund Hakim. He

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<sup>2</sup> Another biographer says that he got Licescens (degree) of graduation in 1337 A.H. (Solar) Cf. Yadnameh Doctor Shariati, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ali Shariati, Kavir, pp. 5-11.

was, also, regarded as one of the most knowledgeable persons of philosophy and scholasticism of his time. He was settled, according to his account, in a small town Bahmanabad from where he was asked to come to Tehran by the then ruler of Iran, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar who had heard about his fame as a philosopher and theologian. He taught in one of the celebrated schools, Madarsa-i-Sipahsalar, at Tehran, and returned to his native village. His<sup>4</sup> father, Mohammad Taqi Shariati, still alive, is himself a celebrated theologian. He has not only inherited traditional religious education but is well acquainted with modern education and disciplines of knowledge. The most important thing which Ali Shariati inherited from his father was social and political awareness. Thus in this early period of his life, his father played an important role in conditioning the mind of young Shariati. He has described his father as one of the "idols (ma'budha-i-man)" at several places<sup>5</sup> in his writings.

Besides religious education he acquired knowledge of Arabic under the able tutorship of his father. Later on, he studied French language also which was becoming popular at that time in the intellectual milieu of Iran as a means for modern ideas as against English which was disliked by the Iranians as a symbol of British imperialism. He acquired so much expertise in both languages at an early age that he was able to translate some important works from both the languages into

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ibid., p.9.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 77-107.

Persian. Most important among these are the following translations: Salman-i-Pak by Louis Massignon and Niyaish by Alexis Carrel. The former is a biographical study of Salman, a favourite companion of the Prophet, and the latter is a treatise on prayer by Alexis Carrel. Later on, he translated Abu Dharr Ghifari, again a biographical work on one of the important companions of the Prophet written by Louis Massignon. But this is not simply a translation as he has substantiated it with a valuable preface and notes. It was first published in 1346 A.H. (Solar) from Mashhad. Ali Shariati was also wellversed in English. His profound knowledge of Arabic helped him greatly for having access to the classical Islamic literature in Arabic with which the personal library of his ancestors was full, while the knowledge of French gave him opportunity to know the West. Ali Shariati was an ardent lover of books and liked reading very much. As he himself said "I read therefore I live" (Mutala' mikunam ki Zindagi mikunam).

Ali Shariati was not an ordinary student who confined his activities to curricular works and spend spare time in playgrounds. Much of his time was spent in extra-curricular activities. Even in his teens, besides educational accomplishments, he took active interest in socio-political organizations as a student. Iran at that time was passing through a turmoil. The period from his childhood to youth was marked by the political, social as well as intellectual changes in Iranian society. These developments necessitated the emergence of a number of social, political and religious organizations which propagated one ideology or the other. These

organizations worked to attract the students to their activities. Ali Shariati's bringing up in an environment of commitment to the society and people required him to associate himself with these organizations.

There was a popular feeling of dislike among the people against the monarchical rule of the Shah. It can undoubtedly be said that whole Iran was united against Imperialism, including religious and clerical leadership so much so that "not only the progressive elements of the clergy but also its reactionary section confronted the regime." Besides religious opposition against the Shah, there were a number of organizations committed to leftist ideologies - most prominent among them being Tudeh Party of Iran.<sup>7</sup> Development of political awareness was rapid particularly after the Shah was forced to announce the freedom of press and give other concessions after the World War II. The period of 1904s is supposed to be the period of intellectual and cultural

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6 Bizhan Jazani. Capitalism and Revolution in Iran: Selected Writings of Bizhan Jazani (New Delhi, 1962) p. 18.

7 For a critical analysis of the socio - political and economic situation of Iran of that time and the role of communist movement in it see Bizhan Jazani, op.cit. pp. 1-44.

awakening in Iran; various kinds of thoughts prevailed. The newspapers and journals were full of nationalist themes. Nationalism, democracy, socialism, modernization, economic development and social reformation were the main subjects of interest. During this period the economy of the country was fast deteriorating, caused mainly by foreign intervention which led to internal political instability.

The popular mood of the people at the time was represented by three currents - religious, leftist and national. These currents coincided. The Shah was struggling to survive through the help and support of western powers. After World War II, the Shah conceded to the popular demand and gave some kind of peoples representation in the form of restoration of the Majlis (Parliament) and appointed a Prime Minister. But that was only his long term political strategy to regain power; it meant nothing for real reform. The Prime Ministers were changed one after the other, eventually, in 1953 A.D., the Shah succeeded in his efforts to shatter the democratic and reformist forces when he dethroned Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq.

During this period, Ali Shariati came to terms with an organization known as "Markaz baraj Tablighat-i-Haqiqat-i-Islami" (Centre for the propa-  
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gation of Islamic Truth). The organization was founded by some prominent

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8 The name of the organization is given as 'Kanon-i-Nashr-i-Haqiqat-i-Islami' in Zindakinamah, Cf. Zindakinamah, p.4.

reformist personalities including his father. There was another semi political organization called "Jombish-i-Navin-i-Islami" (New Islamic Movement) associated with the former and founded by the same persons. The purpose of these organizations was to create political and social awareness among the people through religion. Ali Shariati involved himself deeply into the activities of these organizations. Probably at the instance of his father who encouraged him to join the party, he soon became one of the most active members of these organizations. His involvement proved to be very useful as he came closer to more radical sections of students and youngsters, and it was through them that he came across the Movement of Socialist Worshipper of God "Nahzat-i-Khuda Parastan-i-Socialist".<sup>9</sup> It was this organization which in

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<sup>9</sup> "Nahzat-i-Khudaparastan-i-Socialist (The Movement of Socialist Worshipper of God) was the group which was established secretly in 1323 and 1324 A.H. (Solar) in Tehran. This organization was founded by the active Muslim Youths who emphasized Tauhid, but believed that the Islamic economic system is a kind of socialism. They also believed in a revolutionary movement which could regenerate the Iranian society. The strategy of the organization was strictly secret. In its early stages it was an intellectual movement which tried to spread its ideology and train its cadre remaining underground. Later on, differences arose in the organization itself, as to whether it should confine to ideological work only or participate in the political struggle for the Nationalization of petroleum led by Dr. Mousaddiq. A group which believed in the policy of open struggle formed a separate organization known as "Hizb-i-Mardum-i-Iran" (Iran Peoples Party) led by an activist Nakhshab. However, the present organization Socialist Worshipper of God continued to follow its own programme. Zindakinameh. p.5.

fact, served for him the platform to discover his potentialities and to develop his political and social consciousness. The influence of this organization is clearly visible in the make up of Ali Shariati's mind. The organization, as it is evident from its name, was a religious organization with a left-from-the-centre inclination. It seems that during the time of his association with this organization he studied socialist literatures including the works of Karl Marx and other socialist writers who brought great influence on his mind so much so that he became a staunch admirer of Marx. He was closely associated with this organization and actively took part in its secret activities.

By the time Ali Shariati got himself admitted to the Faculty of Letters of the Mashhad University, he had already gone under the influence of leftist ideology. He joined "Nahzat-i-Maqavanat-i-Milli"<sup>10</sup> (National Resistance Movement) which was a new front of Mosaddeq's "Jebh-i-Milli" (National Front) banned by the Shah. He was so much involved in the activities of these anti-government organizations that when the government of the Shah cracked upon these organizations for the first time after his re-installation as the King, in a major operation, Ali Shariati too was arrested from Mashhad. This happened on

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<sup>10</sup> Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleqani, Dr. Sahabi, Engineer Bazargan and Aqa Baza Zanjani were among the leaders of the National Resistance Movement Cf. Zindakinameh, p.11.

12th Mehrmah 1336 A.H. (Solar, coinciding Sep. 1957 A.D.). He was picked up from Mashhad alongwith his father, Taher Ahmadzadeh and several other leaders of the Nahzat-i-Khudaparastan-i-Socialist. He was the youngest of them. He was put behind the bars in Tehran. This was his first imprisonment which lasted for eight months. Due<sup>11</sup> to this he had to discontinue his studies.

In this phase of his life Ali Shariati appears to be a laborious and hardworking student, a faithful teacher and a committed social activist. He started his career as a writer contributing to local dailies and journals. The articles generally dealt with social or religious themes. The most important work of his early phase, besides translations, are "Tarikh-i-Takamul-i-Falsafa" and "Sima-i-Mohammad". The former is supposed to be the first glimpse of his ideas about Islam, while the latter was a treatise on the life of Prophet Muhammad. The article "Tarikh-i-Takamul-i-Falsafa" was published in the series of Maktab-i-Vasita volume I in 1334 A.H. (Solar). "Sima-i-Mohammad" was published in the series of Mohammad Khatim-i-Payambaran in the same year. In the former he tried to describe Islam as a 'median school among the different schools of philosophy, or intermediate between socialism and capitalism, which adopted the advantages and positive

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<sup>11</sup> He completed his graduation in 1337/38 A.H. (Solar) in Persian literature from Faculty of Letters (Danish Kade-i-Adabiyat va Ulum-i-Islami), Mashhad University, Mashhad.



aspects of other schools of thought while avoiding their negative aspects." <sup>12</sup> In the latter he tried to portray the visage of the Prophet Muhammad as a champion of humanity and mankind. Later on when Ali Shariati started extensive reformatory campaign, these two works of his, particularly the former one, became the target of criticism by the Mujtahids on account of his radical ideas. He was charged of propagating socialist and communist views. It may not be clear as to what might have been his ideas about Marxism and socialism as he matured, but one cannot deny the strong influence of these ideas on his mind at this stage. Even in the latter stages of his life he could not abandon them completely. This influence is also evident in those translations which he did during this period, particularly the translation of the book Abu Darr Ghifari. It is interesting to note why he chose the book Abu Darr for translation. Obviously, because the author of the book tried to present Abu Darr as the first socialist in Islam and naturally Ali Shariati found solace in him. The Islam as interpreted by Abu Darr al-Ghifari, a close companion of the prophet, was a simple, pure and ascetic religion which represented the cause of the poor and the dispossessed. The companion led a poor, simple and pure life, a life which Ali Shariati tried to idealise. He was a staunch critic of luxurious and ostentatious life. Shariati confessed to himself that he was imitating the life style

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<sup>12</sup> Gholam Abbas Tavassoli, "Introduction" in Hamid Algar. (trs.) On the Sociology of Islam, p. 19.

of this great personality. His devotion to him was so great that he liked himself to be known as Abu Dharr. His friends and admirers often called him as "Abu Dharr-i-Zaman" (Abu Dharr of the time), an epithet which he liked. Ali Shariati tried to emulate the life struggle of Abu Darr and thus he lived a simple life and refused a comfortable life offered to him on more than one occasion.<sup>13</sup>

As stated above, during the early phase of his life he was greatly influenced by his father Mohammed Taqi Shariati under whose able tutorship he not only attained a thorough knowledge of religious sciences but also actively took part in social and political activities. He writes about the influence of his father on his mind in the following words:

"My father was the first to determine the early dimensions of my soul. It was he who for the first time taught me the art of thinking (Hunar-i-fikr Kardan) and the art to become human being (Fan-i-Insan Budan). In my early age, he gave me a taste for freedom, nobility, purity, ambition, chastity of soul, steadfastness, faith and freedom of heart. It was he who for the first time acquainted me with his books. I am familiar and friendly to his books from my early days of childhood. I was brought up in his library ... [As a result] in whatever class I got in I was hundred lessons ahead of my classmates and ninety nine lessons ahead of my teachers. Too many things which he had learnt in his old age and long experience of struggle all

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13 Cf. Anonymous, "Guzarishi Az Yek Hamasa". Islam: Maktab-i-Mobarez (Europe and U.S.A.) Vol. 23, p.23.

he transmitted to me in my early years of youth. My father's library is still a world of reminiscence and is dearest to me. Its books even its binding covers are related to me. I love this beautiful and holy room."<sup>14</sup>

Among those who taught him formally in the classes there was one Abul Hasan Khan Faroghi whom he owed some influence to his own admission. He taught him when he was studying at the Faculty of Letters, Mashhad. He writes about him in the following words:

"It was he who for the first time taught me the extent to which a man could develop himself and to what extent he could ascend and "become" (beshawad). It was not a small lesson altogether. I have seen a number of men who are small weak fragile, content and lean because they did not learn this lesson."<sup>15</sup>

After he completed graduation in the first division from Mashhad University, the authorities of the University proposed his name for higher studies abroad and awarded a fellowship. But Ali Shariati was not prepared to leave Iran. His teachers and friends advised him to avail the opportunity and to go to France for higher study. Finally he decided to proceed to France albeit reluctantly. But the secret agencies of the government created obstacles in his way and were not willing to permit him to leave Iran. More than a year passed when he finally succeeded in getting his  
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visa and passport. After reaching France, he took admission in Sorbonne

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<sup>14</sup> Ali Shariati, op.cit., pp. 77-78.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Zindakinameh, v. 13.

University of Paris for a Ph.D. degree in Sociology.

As soon as Ali Shariati reached Paris, he got himself involved in multifarious activities. To acquaint himself with most upto-date trends in the field of knowledge became his primary aim. Here he got an opportunity to study the writings of those philosophers and men of letters whose works were not available in Iran. Here he became aware of a new discipline - Sociology, a subject which became his permanent field of interest. Apart from Sociology he also took keen interest in humanist philosophies, philosophy of history, especially existentialism. He made a special study of the writings of contemporary humanists existentialists and sociologists like, Erich Fromm, Chandel, Albert Comus, Arnold Toynbee, George Gurevich, Jean Paul Sartre, and Islamists like Louis Massignon, Jacques Berque etc. He extensively quotes from their writings in his lectures and writings which shows that he had sufficiently grasped their thoughts.

Among his formal teachers, who taught him in classes while he was studying at the Sorbonne University, were a number of great sociologists like, Gurevich, Andre Schwartz, Henery Lofore and Jean Kokto. He was particularly close to Gurevich. Among his classmates he was considered

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17 George Gurevich was Professor of Sociology at Sorbonne University Paris when Ali Shariati was studying there. He was a Russian. He was a member of Communist Party of Russia. He worked with Lenin. But he had differences with Stalin. He was both against Stalinism and Fascism during the World War II. He, therefore, lived underground in Europe, since both the Nazi and Stalinian secret agencies were looking for him. He had a prize money on his head by both the powers. After the war, he joined Sorbonne University as a Professor of Sociology. Ali Shariati was his student and a great admirer of him.

to be the most intelligent student. According to his own claim, he was regarded as an "authority (Gurevich Shins) on Gurevich's sociological thoughts."<sup>18</sup> Jean Paul Sartre, whom he also knew personally, is reported<sup>19</sup> to have spoken highly about Ali Shariati.

<sup>20</sup>  
Among the Islamists of the time, Louis Massignon influenced him most, a fact acknowledged by Ali Shariati himself. He is full of praise for this French Scholar. Massignon was already known to him

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18 Ali Shariati, op.cit., p. 92.

19 Ali Shariati lived in the neighbourhood of Sartre in fact on the same street. He mentions that he used to have frequent talks with him. Cf. Ali Shariati, Ibid., pp. 224-225.

20 Louis Fernand Jules Massignon (1883 - 1962 A.D.) the great French Arabist and Islamist is the author of a number of works on Islamic and Arabic studies. He specially worked on the great personalities of Islam like Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Salman-i-Farsi, the companions of the prophet, Fatima the daughter of the prophet and Mansoor al-Hallaj, the great Islamic mystic. He is popularly known as "Shaykh" among the Muslim scholars on account of his keen interest in Islamic subjects. Ali Shariati had worked with him during his last days of life. He was too impressed by him.

while he was still in Mashhad. As stated above, he had translated an important book of Louis Massignon entitled Abu Dharr during this period. In Paris he got the opportunity to work directly under him. Shariati describes his association with Louis Massignon in the glowing terms:

"I have a humble opportunity of being associated with him during 1960 to 1962 A.D. It was the time when he was engaged in doing research on the political, moral and spiritual personality of Fatima. I helped him in collecting, reading, translating and discussing Persian works relevant to this topic. These two years are among the most proud worthy (pur Iftikhar) times of my life, for, I worked with the great man on a great work. But what gave me immense pleasure and made my life meaningful and proudworthy was the impact of this great, solemn, decent, genius and intellectual soul. He was a combination of the most eminent qualities which a man could possess. .... I have not seen a more beautiful personality (Zebeha Tar) then this man for the whole of my life."<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere he says:

"I respect (Tazeem) Gurevich but I have devotion (Tagdees) for Massignon. Lofore, Sartre and Gurevich, filled my mind and intellect (Maghz ra pur Kerdand va Aqlam ra Sayr Kardand) and taught me to think ... but I love Massignon (Doost Mi Dashtam) who filled my soul and heart (Ruham ra Sayrab Mi Kard Qalbam ra pur Mi Kard).<sup>22</sup>

The other dimension of Ali Shariati's activities in Paris was his close association with Iranian freedom movement. There were several organizations which were working against the Pahlvi regime in Paris as in other

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21 Ali Shariati, op.cit., pp. 78-79.

22 Ibid., p. 84.

parts of the world. There were a number of leaders who were living in exile in Paris at that time. Ali Shariati developed close contacts with them. When the Iranian National Front<sup>23</sup> was established in America he was its founder member. He attended its first inaugural meeting held in 1340 A.H. (Solar)/25th Feb. 1962 A.D. He also attended the inaugural<sup>24</sup> meeting of a similar organisation which was established in Wiesbaden in 1341 A.H. (Solar)/May 1962 A.D. He was appointed editor of the above<sup>25</sup> mentioned organisation's organ Iran Azad (Free Iran). He had also close links with the Iranian Students Organisations formed outside Iran, such as namely Ittehadia Anjuman-i-Islami Danishjuyan dar Urupa (Union of Islamic Students Associations in Europe), and Anjuman-i-Danishjuyan-i-Islami dar Amrika va Canada (Students Islamic Association in America and Canada). The organ of these two organizations, Islam: Maktab-i-Mobarez, was a widely read magazine among the Iranian exiles living in Europe. The intellectuals and leaders of all the groups of opinion contributed to this magazine. Ali Shariati was also one of them. These organizations published regularly the lectures and articles of Ali Shariati

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23 Jebh-i-Milli Iran dar Amrika

24 Jebhe-i-Milli Iran dar Urupa.

25 The first issue of Iran Azad appeared on 15 November, 1962. A.D. But after a few issues it was closed. Cf. Zindakinameh, p. 15.

and made an arrangement for their distribution. His association with the organisations was so close that when he died the magazine brought out two special issues on the life and thought of Ali Shariati.<sup>26</sup>

In Paris, Ali Shariati also formed a small circle of Iranian students who opposed the despotic regime of the Shah. Their organisation was known as Javanan-i-Nahzat-i-Milli Iran Urupa (The Iranian Youths of the National Movement in Europe) until it was merged into the greater organisation mentioned above, i.e. Jebh-i-Milli.<sup>27</sup>

As a champion of man's freedom Ali Shariati fully supported other liberation movements operating from France such as Algerian Liberation Front, Palestinian Liberation Organisation and several revolutionary movements of the Asians and the Africans. He was particularly interested in the Algerian Liberation Front which was at that time waging a final war against the French Colonial Rule. Ali Shariati contributed a number of articles to Al-Mujahid, the official organ of the ALF in which he bitterly opposed the atrocities committed by the French government against the Algerian people especially against the member of the ALF. He actively participated in the protest demonstrations led by the freedom fighters of Algeria and other nations in Paris. He went several times to Lebanon to attend the meetings

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26 Islam : Maktab-i-Mabarez, vol. 23 & 24.

27 Zindakinameh, p. 14.



organised by the PLO. On account of his activities he came to be black-listed by the French Intelligence. He was arrested by the French Police when he was leading a demonstration in Paris in protest against the murder of the central African leader Patric Lumumba. He was also attacked by some unidentified persons while he was on his way to his apartment most probably by the agents of SAVAK in France.

In the process of his association with Algerian revolutionary movement Ali Shariati came in contact with the revolutionary leaders of his time such as Ahmad Ben Bella, Hawari Boumedienne, Omar Ozren and Frantz Fanon.

He was greatly influenced by the ideas of Frantz Fanon, and in order to acquaint his compatriots with his progressive ideas, he translated his book Les Damnés de la Terre into Persian entitled Dozakhyan-i-Zameen<sup>28</sup>. Besides this, he frequently quotes Fanon in his writings and speeches. Ali Shariati tried to acquaint his countrymen with the radical ideas of a number of other revolutionary figures of the time irrespective of their religion. As one close friend of Ali Shariati puts it "the ideas that were taking shape in various popular and Islamic movements in Asia and Africa could inspire a new intellectual dynamism in the social and political struggle of the Iranian Muslims, and indeed he always advised his

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<sup>28</sup> This translation is incorporated in one of his book Bazgash at the end. See Ali Shariati Bazgash (Europe & U.S.A., 1357 A.H. Solar), pp. 405 - 407.

friends and pupils to benefit intellectually from anything the genuine movement of Islamic struggle in our age have to offer".<sup>29</sup>

Ali Shariati returned to his country after five years' stay at Paris. He received two Doctrate degrees from Sorbonne University, one in Sociology and other in Islamic history. But while he was entering the Iranian territory through Turkey, he was arrested at the border port of Bazargan by the Iranian authorities and immediately sent to the Tehran jail. Of course the Iranian intelligence was fully aware of his anti-Shah activities in Paris.

He was however. released after six months, thanks to the requests and appeals of his teachers and friends. After his release Ali Shariati was keen to join as a teacher at either Mashhad University or Tehran University, because he felt that there he would have a proper and suitable platform to preach his ideas and fulfil his mission. But he was denied the job, instead he received humiliation at the hands of the government authorities. He was appointed as a teacher in a primary school at Firdous, a small town in the suburbs of Mashhad by the Ministry of Education.<sup>30</sup> No doubt it was meant to humiliate him. However, he did not give up his efforts and eventually he was successful after a few months in getting himself appointed at the University of Mashhad.

When he returned to Iran from France he was hardly 31, but

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29 Gholam Abbas Tavassoli, op. cit., p.24.

mature enough in his ideas and beliefs. He was not merely an academician seeking for a better job in Iran but had returned with a definite mission to propagate his enlightened ideas. He began to address mammoth gatherings of youths and students. He delivered lectures at different colleges and academic institutions. However, the main centre of his activity was the Mashhad University, where he also delivered series of lecture on "Islam Shinasi" ( Islamology <sup>31</sup> ). These lectures were not just traditional religious or ethical interpretation of Islam but he had a clear reformative and critical purpose in his mind based on sociological approach. Besides Mashhad, he frequently visited other cities and towns, particularly Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz & Qum etc. on the invitation of the student organisations. Very soon, Ali Shariati's speeches and lectures became popular not only among the students and youths but also among elders, academicians, teachers and educationists as well. These lectures began to attract large crowds. His lectures at <sup>32</sup> Hosseinia Irshad in Tehran deserve to be mentioned

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<sup>31</sup> These lectures were later on published in book form entitled Islam Shinasi (Mashhad).

<sup>32</sup> Hosseinia Irshad was founded in 1348 A.H. (Solar) in Tehran. The main purpose of this seminary was to invite the scholars of all the different groups to gather here, and deliver lectures so that a common platform could come into existence which would provide an opportunity for the different groups to come closer and to understand each other. Ali Shariati took a very active part in the seminary. The other founding members were Ayotullah Mohammad Mutahhari, Mohammad Taqi Shariati, Dr. Fakhar Hijazi, and Professor Yodollah Sahabi. He delivered as many as hundred lectures at the seminary in a short span of about five and a half years time from 1347 to 1352 A.H. (Solar) These lectures were taped in millions of cassettes and immediately published in the form of booklet. It is said that Ali Shariati's cassettes and books were the bestseller at that time.

Hosseinia Irshad proved to be a very useful platform for Ali Shariati. As Tehran was the capital and a bigger city than Mashhad, he could reach greater number of people than he could in Mashhad. So he decided to come to Tehran frequently. Hosseinia Irshad became gradually a centre of interest for the people due to the lectures of Ali Shariati. Although these lectures were mainly of the philosophical religious or ethical nature but they contained political overtones. People found here a place to feed their mind with anti-monarchy sentiments. Huge crowds came whenever Ali Shariati was to deliver a lecture. The streets were packed and roads were jammed.

The popularity of Hosseinia Irshad and the anti-government sentiments which it was generating among the people could not be tolerated by the government for a long time. It was closed down in 1353 A.H. (Solar)/ December, 1973 A.D. Ali Shariati was kept under strict surveillance. A ban was imposed upon him not to address public meetings. Then, finally a warrant to arrest him was issued. To avoid arrest he went underground. But he had to appear when police arrested his father in his stead. He was arrested in Mehrmah of 1353 A.H. (Solar). This was his third imprisonment. This time he remained for 18 months in prison. He was not treated as a political prisoner. Criminal charges were levelled against him. He was tortured and interrogated as an ordinary criminal.

The arrest of Ali Shariati caused a great concern inside as well as outside the country, protest meetings and demonstrations were organized by the students and national opposition parties. Both the leftist and rightist parties of Iran deplored the imprisonment of Ali Shariati. Several friends

of Ali Shariati outside the country appealed to the Iranian government for his release. Under these internal and external pressures the Shah released Ali Shariati. But he was prohibited from addressing public meetings. His books remained banned. His movement was watched and his residence was put under vigilance round the clock. He was virtually a prisoner in his home. This was the most unhappy situation for him. He remained in this condition for several months. His well wishers, in the meantime advised him to go abroad. But Ali Shariati did not want to leave the country. Ultimately he was convinced that he could serve his nation better from outside the country which he could not do while living in the country. But leaving the country also was not easy for him. He therefore made a secret plan with his trusted friends to leave the country. According to this plan, he applied for a passport under a fake name 'Ali Mazinani'. He and his family applied for permission to go abroad for treatment. It was also envisaged that he will leave alone and after a few days his wife and daughters were to join him in London. Then Ali Shariati flew to Brussels, from where he came to London. He waited in London for his family. But he could meet only two of his daughters; his wife and the youngest daughter were not permitted to leave Iran. On the same night i.e. Wednesday, 29 Khurdadmah, 1356 A.H.(Solar)/June 19, 1977 A.D., he was found dead mysteriously in his apartment at Southampton. His dead body was brought to Damascus and was buried beside the grave of Zaynab, the daughter of Imam Hussein, according to his will.

## CHAPTER - II

### WORKS OF ALI SHARIATI

Ali Shariati started his career as a writer when he was still a student at the University of Mashhad. He also translated some works from French and Arabic into Persian during this period. But when he returned from Paris he was forced to give up writing articles and he started giving lectures in order to propagate his ideas. Thus most of his works are in the form of speeches and talks delivered on various occasions in the country as well as abroad. He was a fluent speaker and a great orator. Most of these lectures were given at the Mashhad University and Hosseinia Irshad in Tehran. These lectures were published in the form of pamphlets. He could not find time to revise the texts of the speeches (except, in a few cases) before they were sent to the press. Thus the texts of the same lecture published from different places had variations. Publishers were at liberty to omit sentences at their will. Furthermore, these lectures were published for reform

purposes by the voluntary organisations (mostly free of cost or with nominal prices), and no effort was made to present standardised editions of his works. The lectures of Ali Shariati were also published by various organisations and seminaries close to Ali Shariati. The most authentic texts are those published by the organisations like Intesharat-i-Shariati, Tehran and Sazman-i-Intesharat -i-Hosseinia-Irshad, Tehran. The lectures published by the Union of Islamic students Association in Europe and Muslim students Association in America and Canada also bear authenticity.

In 1352 A.H. (Solar), when he was prohibited from addressing public meetings and was placed under house arrest and subsequently sent to jail, a ban was also imposed upon the publication of his works. In such a situation his books were published under pseudonym. One cannot rule out the possibility of a considerable number of works falsely ascribed to him. When he was in jail the regime of the Shah published a number of works purporting to be written by Ali Shariati which contained pro-government ideas.

However, there are a number of works that have been published checked and revised by Shariati himself. Besides these, there are other works which were originally written by him. These comprise his articles, letters and notes. But the number is relatively short. The works of Ali Shariati can be divided into three categories.

1. Written works (Navishtaha)
2. Lectures and Lessons (Sukhanraniha va Durus)
3. Translations (Tarjumaha)

There are a number of lectures which are yet to be published, they are recorded on tapes.

The following are some of his important books introduced briefly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>  
Kavir :

This book is supposed to be the autobiography of Ali Shariati. But the author has not, basically, intended to write his autobiography as we do not find in it description of his life's events. It is rather in the nature of being a description of his spiritual and intellectual adventure in his usual poetic style. Only the first chapter of the book gives an account of his family and surroundings. About his personal life, he has written only briefly and in a passing manner. There is no chronology, no details, nor can we gather from it any important event of his life. This is in fact a compiled work which contains his impressions and experiences in the world.

The book is a master piece of Persian prose writing. The language is simple but vigorous and symbolic too. Kavir, in Persian means

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1 A list of the works of Ali Shariati is given in the bibliography.

2 Ali Shariati, Kavir (n.p., 1348 A.H. Solar), pp. 477.



desert and it is also the name of the largest desert in Iran. His birth place Mazinan is situated at the edge of the desert and in a way it symbolises the author's life. The subject matter of the book is the dearest topic of the author. As he says, he divides his writings into three categories : Ijtemaiyat (on sociology), Islamiyat (on Islam) and Kaviriyat (on Personal Life). According to him the first kind of his works were liked by common readers; the second kind of the works was liked both by him and the readers; while the third kind pleased him  
3  
alone.

The book was published for the first time in 1348 A.H. (Solar) in Mashhad. The second edition of the book also appeared in the same year with considerable additions. Shariati wrote a preface for the second edition. Besides, two more chapters were added into it which were earlier written and published elsewhere, "Saroud.-i-Afrinish" and "Insan Khudaguna-yi-dar Tabaeed".

Ali Shariati frankly described in it his experiences and his general outlook of the world. He writes in it what he liked and what he did not like. The chapter under the title "Mabudha-i-Man" (My Idols) is devoted to describe his main heroes and chief influences.

Az Kuja Aghaz Kunim (From Where Shall We Begin)<sup>4</sup> :

This book is a long lecture delivered by him at the Aryamahar

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3 Cf. Ali Shariati, "Preface to the Second Edition", Ibid., p.9.

4 Ali Shariati, Az Kuja Aghaz Kunim (Tehran : Sazman-i-Intisharat-i-Hosseinia Irshad, n.d.), pp.42.

Industrial University. The theme of the book is to describe the basic problems of the Islamic countries and the role and responsibilities of the "Roushanfikir". Ali Shariati prefers to use the word "Roushanfikir" in place of "intellectual". Because his concept of Roushanfikir differs from the conventional meaning of the term intellectual. According to him, the word "intellectual" does not correspond fully to the connotation of the word "Roushanfikir". Therefore, it is wrong to translate "Roushanfikir" as "intellectual"<sup>5</sup>.

Roushanfikir is precisely defined by him as a "man who possesses self-consciousness in historical and social time and space in which he lives. The self consciousness, naturally, gives him a sense of responsibility. A Roushanfikir is a self conscious and responsible being. He may and may not be educated"<sup>6</sup>. He describes the difference between an "intellectual" and a Roushanfikir in the following words :

"An intellectual (who has mistakenly been taken for a great thinker) is an individual who primarily does mental work. He may or may not be a free thinker<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, it is possible to be an economist or a laborer and so forth and still be a freethinker. Therefore, the relationship between free

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5 Ibid., p.9.

6 Ibid., pp.9 - 10.

7 The term "Roushanfikir" may be translated into English as "Enlightened" or Free thinker<sup>7</sup>, or even as "intellectual". Ali Shariati himself has used only Roushanfikir, even for 'intellectual'. Here the translator preferred Free-thinker.

thinking and intellectualism is neither equivalent nor can it be generalized. In short, every freethinker is an intellectual but not every intellectual (may turn out) to be a freethinker.

Who, then, is a freethinker? In a nutshell, a freethinker is an individual who is conscious of his own human condition, his society, and the period in which he lives. And willy nilly, such a self awareness will give him a sense of responsibility. If a freethinker is educated he will be more effective, if not, he will perhaps be less effective. Of course at the beginning stages of his campaign education is useful, but as time goes on an uneducated individual can play a much stronger and more important role....

In short, today, in a period in which man has reached a dead-end, and the third world is grappling with innumerable abnormalities and problems, a freethinker is an individual who can help the masses to become aware, find direction, and accept responsibility. Based upon this definition a freethinker is not heir to Galileo, Copernicus, Socrates, Aristotle and Avicenna, since other like Von Braun, Einstein will continue and complete their work. The duties of freethinker resemble the function of the revolutionaries and leaders of the past, that is, the prophets and the founders of the religion who are not like philosophers, scientist, artist or writers"<sup>8</sup>.

He further says :

"A freethinker cannot claim that he is a freethinker because he has studied in Europe and obtained a degree. And unfortunately since we have been dealing with a freethinker, scientist, and an intellectual as synonymous terms, we have not been able to identify (define) a freethinker, nor does the latter know which specific category he belongs to either. A freethinker's responsibility is not something to be learned in famous universities. If there are exceptions. They are not due to either Harvard or the Sorbonne. The fact is that without having attended such institutions, these individuals would have been freethinkers anyway.

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<sup>8</sup> Ali Shariati, Az Kuja Aghaz Kunim tr. by Fatollah Marjani From Where Shall We Begin (Houston, Texas, 1980), p.8.

As we noticed, there is no freethinker in an universal sense, although there are freethinkers. For instance, we can say that so and so gentleman is a freethinker in Africa, but if he goes to an Islamic land he will be an anonymous figure as will a French freethinker become paralyzed in India. Take Jean Paul Sartre (who is a freethinker in his society and in the industrial west in general); will he still be a freethinker if he went in another society? Obviously where this individual goes is important. If he goes from France to Germany or to North America he will be a freethinker, especially in the latter land even more so"<sup>9</sup>

Describing the duties of a Roushanfikir he says :

"A freethinker's task is to act as a prophet (which he is not) and convey God's message to the masses. He must yell into the masses clogged and frozen ears, lead them, rekindle a new faith and create awareness. Mind you that these are not all bailiwicks of a scientist who performs clear-cut functions such as a diagnosis of the present condition, discovery and employment of man's and nature's forces, and providing life's material needs. A scientist discovers realities, but a freethinker discovers the truth. A scientist claims "this is the way it should be", while a freethinker says, "This is not the way it should be ... it must be ...." The scientist builds a lighthouse either to lead or mislead, while a freethinker as a forerunner and scout calls people to journey and shows them the way. This is why a scientist can occasionally be manipulated and turned into a toy in the hands of various individuals while a freethinker instinctively negates darkness, oppression and the oppressor. This is due to the fact that knowledge is power but freethinker is light"<sup>10</sup>

Ali Shariati condemns the 'so-called' intellectuals of the Islamic world. He found them wanting in realization of the problems

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of their societies. He points out that the basic mistake that these intellectuals committed was that they blindly accepted what the western culture tried to impose upon their societies. He describes this fact in the following words :

"Unfortunately our past in the third world, especially the Islamic countries, has witnessed innumerable mistakes and deviations committed by the freethinkers. So much so that a research project in the name of the "history of the screw-ups" can be conducted. Such a project would be a service to people and freethinkers. These freethinkers have always been under the impression that in order to play a freethinker's role, they ought to study particular mottoes and ideologies in the west, and import free-thinking to their societies. As a result of this type of mentality, they have committed bizarre and tragic blunders. In the process they have sacrificed their culture along with best talents and geniuses who would have been able to make up for all the past backwardness and loss in a short time and save everyone. Often, for years, our freethinkers have focused their attentions, energies and sentiments upon a specific issue and problem. They changed slogans, evangelized and fought. Once succeeding, they had been on the wrong truck all along. The end result ? Having been disillusioned, they often resorted to desperation, hatred, shrugging off responsibility, and finally toying with theosophy and existentialism. Then another identical cycle would begin ...

I remember in my elementary days in the religious city of Mashhad, an art teacher who had just turned into a freethinker. He was rapidly making up for his past failure and deficiencies. He believed the only way we could make headway and save the people was through art. For instance, he believed that a painter could precisely identify a society's problems....

Once we asked the teacher what did the whole thing have to do with our Eastern way of life ? "Europe was progressive because boys and girls lived together. And since in Asia sexes are segregated, we become corrupt, weak, ignorant, and developed varieties of complexes". So, in his view, the most important responsibility of a freethinker was to arrange the contingencies in such a way that males and females

could easily socialize. Only then would we be truly Europe-  
nized. There are now writers and freethinkers in our society  
who are trying to convince parents that the roots of our  
miseries in the Islamic societies are due to the existence  
of sexual barriers. And they are convinced that once these  
barriers are removed, Islamic nations would solve all their  
problems. Please take note of the extent of the tragedy and  
how attentions are being focused on such trivial problems.  
It is funny"<sup>11</sup>.

Tarikh va Shinakht-i-Adyan (History and Understanding of the Religions)<sup>12</sup> :

Shariati had started a series of lectures at Hosseinia Irshad in  
Tehran. The whole programme was intended to be divided into three parts  
and to be concluded in three years. At the first stage, he had thought  
to deliver a series of lectures on the history of different prominent  
religions of the world including Islam. This was to be followed by two  
series of lectures to be delivered during the next two years on the  
sociology of religions and Islamology. According to the programme, he  
was to deliver his lectures fortnightly. Although the whole programme  
was not materialized nor the punctuality of the programme observed,  
but the first series of the lectures were delivered more or less in time.  
This book is composed of those lectures.

It contains fourteen lectures delivered from 20 Farrardin 1350 A.H.  
(Solar) to Bahman 1350 A.H. (Solar). He gives an idea of how and to what

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp.13 - 15.

<sup>12</sup> Ali Shariati, Tarikh va Shinakht-i-Adyan (n.p., n.d.), pp.516.

extent he understood different ideologies and different religions. A few chapters deal with the origins of Islam and shiism. He tries to show how Islam developed as an instrument of change and welfare.

Islam Shinasi (Tehran) (Islamology)<sup>13</sup> :

This is one of the most important works of Dr. Ali Shariati. It is considered to be a unique contribution to Islamic literature. It consists of the second series of lectures given by him at Hosseinia Irshad in Tehran entitled "Lessons on Islam Shinasi". This contains eleven lectures of which first eight lectures are of considerable importance as they are crucial in understanding his world out-look.

The first two lectures deal with his basic ideas on Islamic ideology under the title of Tarah-i-Asasi-i-Maktab. In the beginning he defines Islam as an ideology and discusses its structure and super-structures. Then he formulates his whole system of thought in ideological vein. He divides his lectures into seven topics. He says that there are four dimensions of Tauhid which is the fundamental tenet of Islam. Unlike traditional theologians Tauhid is defined as a world-view. It is also defined as a philosophy of history, sociology and ethics. Next, he discusses the concept of ideal society (Ummah). At the end he explains the concepts of a perfect man in Islam. He illustrates his ideas through a diagram in which he tries to reconstruct his

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<sup>13</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran) : Durus Yek Ta Yazdaham (n.p., n.d.), pp.494.

entire view of religion and society.

While the first two lectures give a brief summary of Islamic ideology, the third lecture entitled "Jahanbini-i-Tauhid" i.e. the world-view of Tauhid, discusses in detail the concepts of universe, material and transcendental phenomena, contradictions and unity in nature etc. The fourth lecture deals with the sociology of Tauhid and the sociology of Polytheism (Jamia Shinasi-i-Shirk). The fifth lecture is entitled "Tarh-i-Kulli-i-Dars".

The sixth lecture "Barakhizim va Gami Fara Peesh Nahim" (Let us Rise and Advance) is important on account of its radicalism. In this he describes the meaning of being Muslim and highlights the achievement of Islamic culture and civilization. He stresses the need for revolutionising the Islamic society and evaluates the works of great Islamic renovators of recent centuries and their services to Islamic society.

In the seventh lecture i.e. "Tauhid Yek Falsafa-i-Tarikh", (Tauhid a Philosophy of History) which is a detailed one, Tauhid is studied as a philosophy of history. In it he compares Quranic concept of Tauhid with other religions as well as modern and ancient schools of philosophers, such as Greek Indian and even Chinese. In the eighth chapter entitled "Falsafa-i-Ikhlaq", Tauhid is studied as a philosophy of ethics. The ninth chapter deals with the fifth pillar of Islam, i.e. Haj, which he considers a physical manifestation of the unity of Islam.



The tenth and eleventh chapters are entitled "Falsafa-i-Tarikh"  
(Philosophy of History) and "Falsafa-i-Taqdir-i-Ilmi-i-Tarikh"<sup>14</sup>  
(Philosophy of scientific determinism of history) respectively.

Insan va Islam ( Man and Islam) :

This is a collection of six lectures delivered by Ali Shariati at different places. The first edition of the book was published in Tehran in 1450 A.H. (Solar). The second edition published the same year, was revised by the author and contains also the proceedings of a question - answer session. The book is one of the most popular and widely read works of Ali Shariati. These lectures have also been published separately and translated into other languages.

The first and the third chapter of the book entitled "Insan va Islam" and "Chahar Zindan-i-Insan" were delivered at Petroleum College of Abadan and Women's College, Tehran respectively. Both lectures deal<sup>15</sup> with humanism of Islam . The second chapter entitled "Jahanbini Mazhabi va Maadi" deals with the world view, of Tauhid vis a vis other world views.

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<sup>14</sup> The whole book consists of 494 pages. One thing that must be made clear here is that this book is quite different from his earlier work bearing the same title. To avoid confusion, therefore, this book is referred to as Islam Shinasi (Tehran) and the other as Islam Shinasi (Mashhad). These lectures have also been published separately under various titles.

<sup>15</sup> For his ideas on Islamic Humanism, see chapter III of this dissertation.

The fourth and fifth lectures under the title "Shakhsiat-i-Farhanji va Bahrabardari-i-Manab-i-Aan", (Extraction of cultural Resources) deal with the cultural alienation of the third world societies brought about by the West. According to Shariati, in modern times, the third world countries borrowed their inspiration from the west which is the main cause of their degeneration. He says that in order to progress and build up a society the people should be made conscious of their heritage. He says :

"We notice that there is an exact correspondence between the economic and the spiritual fate of East. As I mentioned before, a nation which is incapable of utilizing its own material resources remain hungry, no matter how rich it is. By the same token if a nation cannot know its own cultural and spiritual resources and is incapable of extracting, refining and turning them into energy, it will remain ignorant and backward while sitting upon piles of spiritual and cultural resources. The same type of correspondence exists between the role of cultural and material resources in the fate of a society. That is, those who are incapable of utilizing their resources have to extend their hands for nations from foreigners. We see that the conscious Europe, which knows us better than we ourselves, utilizes our cultural and spiritual resources and builds new schools of thought and ideas. Since we are not worthy of a conscious utilization of our spiritual resources, our freethinkers have to beg them, and it never dawns on these freethinkers that what they are receiving is their own raw materials. Since they were not able to utilize their own resources, they are being accused of savagery, ignorance, spiritual, moral and material poverty. Therefore, as the East is trying to know its own raw material resources - learning to entrust them, showing their worth in refining and converting them to energy - in order to save itself from poverty, it would also do the same in cultural realms. By extracting and refining its cultural resources it must attain a spiritual comfort, as well as a spirit movement and creativity. As the East is trying to become self sufficient and independent in the economic realm in order not to consume European consumer goods by utilizing the same

consciousness, it must try to become independent of western spiritual products and ultimately achieve moral and spiritual independence."<sup>16</sup>

Ali Shariati believes that westernization in the name of modernization is a part of the conspiracy of European Imperialism. Westernization of the Asian and African societies is aimed to make them bankrupt from their own heritage and culture.

He goes on to say:

"The exploitative sociology of Europe has realized that in order to be able to rob the East, to ride on her back, and to easily deceive her, it is imperative to strip her from her personality. Once it is accomplished, she will proudly follow the west and with unspeakable lunacy and thirst she will consume western goods. Because whoever is deficient in personality will relate himself to someone who has it and one of the manifestations that help an individual resemble someone else is through consumption, by which the person can imitate. This is very true, since those who want, for instance, to look like a celebrity (scientific, artistic and cinematic) often imitate his consumption, and drive his type of auto.

The exploiter wishes to see his machines work all of the time. Furthermore, he wants to see all originality, religion, tastes, and various talents destroyed, so that all races can be changed to become consumers of his products. In order to achieve this purpose, the exploiter reaches for ways to deprive a nation of its personality, which is defined as the unique aspects of a culture that differentiates it from another. Therefore, a generation like tree, must be served from its roots so that it can be used and manipulated any way the exploiter wishes.

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<sup>16</sup> Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam Tr. by Fatollah Marjani, Man & Islam (Houston Texas, 1981), pp. 32-33.

Depriving a nation of its history and cutting it off from its culture with subsequent alienation of the present generation from its cultural resources, have reached a point that the cultures which possessed the prudent religion, most progressive philosophical thinking, the most delicate arts, created the grandest civilization and contributed the most experience to human society, today have become so alienated with their past possessions that they have been transformed into a sort of human being that has to re-learn how to dress, eat, read, and write! why are these societies living in poverty and ignorance while the west and its thinkers, by looting such cultures, are trying to enrich their own cultures?"<sup>17</sup>

The sixth chapter of the book entitled "Ideology" is devoted to prove that Islam is more an ideology than a culture (Farhang). He divides religion into two kinds, one which is based on social custom and the other which is based on ideology. Islam according to him is the latter kind of religion. He says that ideology generates awareness, consciousness and revolution:

" It is a conscious faith dealing with "How the present condition must be".... In any case an ideology explains my condition, where I am in what period of history I am, and what condition myself, my people, my country and humanity are in, relative to various battlefront. A human, class, national or group ideology can respond to them all.

How can man reach an ideology?... As I mentioned before a philosopher is not an ideologist nor is he a scientist,... We conclude that it is an awareness which is limited to man. Anyone can possess it; scientist common man, literate or illiterate, aristocrat or pauper, and any individual in any level of culture and intelligence can have ideological consciousness."<sup>18</sup>

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18 Ibid,p. 97.

Intezar-i-Mazhab-i-I'teraz (Awaiting the Religion of Protest):

This is an important lecture given by him at Hosseinia. Irshad, Tehran in 1350 A.H. (Solar). It was revised and edited by the author before it was sent for publication. In this book he has taken up three major issues regarding Shiism: Notion of the waiting for the last Imam (i.e. Imam-i-Ghayb), the theory of Ghaybat (occultation) and the concept of Imamat (leadership of the society). He underlines the Shii concept of Ghaybat and its impact on the development of a revolutionary movement. The logic and philosophy behind the waiting of the last Imam is discussed in the light of sociological implication of Ghaybat. He tried to prove that the notion of Ghaybat does not lead to the stagnation of society rather it activates for a progressive movement. Thus, it is not a negative but a "positive" waiting (Intizar-i-Musbat). It does not affect adversely the people in their struggle for freedom.  
20  
He equates it with historical determinism.

Hossein Varis-i-Adam (Hossein the Heir of Adam):

Although it is a small article written on the occasion of the Ashura of 1349 A.H. (Solar) in the tone of traditional mourning (Rouda-khwani) of the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, it contains a brief history

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19 Ali Shariati, Intezar-i-Mazhab-i-I'teraz (n.p., n.d.) pp.61.

20 For detailed discussion see Chapter IV of this dissertation.

21 Ali Shariati, Hossein Varis-i-Adam (Europe & USA; 1355 A.H. Solar), pp. 52.

of prophecy right from Adam upto Hossein. This can partly be said to be an excellent piece of prose writing apart from the subject matter of the book. The language is symbolic in which the personality of Imam Hossein is presented as an ideal for humanity. He observes that right from the beginning of civilization on earth until now there have always existed two classes in every society: the class of oppressed people and the class of oppressors. The conflict appears in different form and by different names in different periods of civilization, but the existence of the two antagonistic classes did not cease to exist. The war between these two classes is endless. The prophets have always come to lead the oppressed and fight against the three form of oppression: zar, zor and Tazveer (money, power, and spiritual deception). He shows the manifestation of these evils in each society and civilization.

The book was, revised and its second edition includes a long preface written by him. The edition was published by U.I.S.A. Europe, and M.S.A. America and Canada in 1356 A.H. (Solar).

23

Jamia Shinasi-i-Ummat va Imamat (Sociology of Ummat and Imamat):

This is comparatively a large book consisting of Shariati's lectures delivered in Hosseinia Irshad in Tehran from 11 to 14 Farvardin 1348 A.H. (Solar). In this book we find his ideas regarding two very

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22 For a detailed discussion, see Chapter IV of this dissertation.

23 Ali Shariati, Jamia Shinasi-i-Ummat va Imamat (n.p., n.d.) pp.198.

important notions of Islam viz. concept of Ummat and the concept of Imamat. These two concepts are taken up by Ali Shariati so as to describe the Islamic concept of society and its political ideas. These notions have been discussed from the sociological point of view, as is obvious from the very title i.e. sociology of Ummat and Imamat. In this book he has taken up views like, Nabuvvat, Risalat, Khilafat, Vesayat, Shoura, etc., concept of the completion of the prophecy and its continuance in the form of Imamat, nature of Islamic political system vis a vis other political theories, and some other related topics.

Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi (Alavid Shiism and Safavid Shiism):<sup>24</sup>

The first edition of the book comprised two lectures only delivered at Hosseinia Irshad, Tehran. Later on, it was revised and considerably enlarged by the author in the second edition. A lecture Tashayyu-i-Surkh va Tashayyu-i-Siah (Red Shiism and Black Shiism) delivered in Tehran is included as a preface of the book. The second edition was published in 1352 A.H. (Solar).

No book aroused so much controversy and criticism as this book did. It was particularly attacked by the Iranian clergy and the traditionalists. In this book Ali Shariati has boldly criticised the

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<sup>24</sup> Ali Shariati, Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi (n.p., n.d.) pp. 326.

present form of shiism as nothing but a distorted shiism<sup>25</sup>. He severely attacks the clergy of Iran. A number of books and pamphlets were written condemning him that he was not a shia. Shariati tried to answer some of these criticism in the second edition of the book.

Mazhab Alayh-i-Mazhab ( Religion Against Religion )<sup>26</sup> :

This small book constitutes an important lecture given by Shariati at Hosseinia Irshad, Tehran in 1349 A.H. (Solar), It discusses the role of religions in history. According to him there are two kinds of religions in history; the religion of Tauhid and the religion of Shirk (polytheism). The former is the legacy of Abraham while the latter is the religion which thrived in all the societies. The two religions had always been at war with each other throughout the history. He says that Kufr does not mean atheism as is generally believed. In fact it is a kind of theism. The word Kufr which literally means 'to cover' here means "covering the truth of religion (haqiqat-i-Deen) through another religion (deen)"<sup>27</sup>. While the religion of shirk (Deen-i-shirk) creates conflict, disunity and war in the society through metaphysical beliefs the religion of Tauhid (Deen-i-Tauhid) creates harmony and unity in the society, It expresses itself "in the form of equality of humanity (Vahdat-i-Bashariat) and as equality of all races, and all individuals

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25 See chapter V of this dissertation for a detailed discussion.

26 Ali Shariati, Mazhab Alayh-i-Mazhab (n.p., n.d.), pp.51.

27 Ibid., p.6.



and equality of their rights, values and status in the society". This Abrahamic religion i.e. Religion of Tauhid was revolutionary (Deen-i-Inqilab) from the very beginning and it never supported status quo (Vaza-i-Maujood), while other religions i.e. Religions of Shirk always supported and justified the status quo. He writes :

"The religion of Shirk (Deen-i-shirk) thrived in history in two forms. One, as just said, is justifying the status quo (Taujeeh-i-Vaza-i-Maujood). We find that in history human societies are divided into the classes of pure and impure, master and slave, possessed and dispossessed, ruler and ruled, free and captive, the group which is racially noble and the group which is comprised of untouchables, the inferior nation (millat) and the superior nation, and the dominating class and the downtrodden class. The religion of shirk has served as a justification for this system; it has been a factor which contributed in perpetuating this system. This was in direct opposition to the religion of Tauhid which is the destroyer of this system. Religion of shirk says : there should be many gods in the world which would bring into existence many groups (giroh) and many classes (Tabaqat) and many races in the society. A few people could dispossess the others by force. They usurp the economic and social resources and enjoy privileges .... Religion i.e. religion of shirk took the responsibility of protecting this system. Its function was to make people content and subservient.... Contradiction and class conflict is consolidated by the religion of shirk.

On the other hand the Abrahamic religion aims at destroying the status quo. Its prophets, always stood against the rulers - temporal, spiritual or social, destroyed all the idols, physical, human, economic or material. They gradually eliminated all the manifestation of the religion of shirk i.e. the religion of status quo". "Therefore we may conclude that in history religion was not against irreligiosity or atheism (Bideendi). Religion was against the religion and religion-fought against religion .... The man was always religious; all the societies do not only believe in religion but they were based upon religion. Not only their culture ethics, and philosophies were

religious but their economy and physical forms were also based upon religion .... The prophets and their mission was to fight Kufr, not against atheism"<sup>29</sup>

Machine dar Asarat-i-Machinism ( Machine in the captivity of Machinism):<sup>30</sup>

This is an important lecture given by Shariati at the Polytechnic Institute in Tehran, 1350 A.H. (Solar). He says that the "Scientism" or "Machanism" which emerged after the advancement of science and technology in Europe has brought many evils in society. It has become a source of exploitation of man :

"Machinism is an order imposed upon the machine and incidently, machine can save man. How ? Before the emergence of the machine man had to work twelve hours in order to satisfy his elementary needs. Nowadays a machine does the same job in an hour, leaving man eleven hours of free time! The machine, however, swallows it right back! Because various wants and needs are imposed on us by advertisement, fashion shows, competition and psychology.

In order to satisfy my elementary needs I work one hour with the machine, but machine and capitalism create artificial necessities that are a hundred times the cost of my elementary needs. Yes, the machine leaves us free time hours that can creatively be used, alas, it joggles them right back!

To sum it all up, in order to save ourselves from scientism that brought about machinism and in order to save nature and the material world from materialism and machinism, and finally, in order to save man from all these we must recognize machinism and destroy it. We are at the cross roads, ready to select. What should we do in front of machinism ?

We can neither reject nor negate machinism .... Machinism is here to stay and negation is to bring man to halt. We can not afford to be reactionary, nor can we give in so it could crush us like it has"<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.23 - 28.

<sup>30</sup> Ali Shariati, Machine dar Asarat-i-Machinism (Europe and USA 1356 AH.Solar), pp.61.

<sup>31</sup> Ali Shariati, Machine dar Asarat-i-Machinism tr. by Fatallah Marjani, Machine in the Captivity of Machinism (Houston Texas, 1980), pp. 50 - 51.

### CHAPTER - III

#### ALI SHARIATI ON ETHICS AND HUMANISM OF ISLAM

In Ali Shariati's opinion man has never been given his proper place and recognition in history; he has never been defined and understood what he is by nature and by his essence and existence. The various ideologies and systems of thought right from the ancient Greek enlightenment when the speculations about ontological and human problems began, through neo-platonic mysticism and middle ages philosophies to present day post-renaissance awareness, man has been deprived of proper recognition, understanding of his existential self and essence. The philosophers, the mystics, the scientists, the materialists, and even the religionists are, in retrospect, found to be wanting in a true appreciation of genuine human qualities and potentials.

Shariati's deep insight and study of history, his profound knowledge of history of society and religion and of philosophy of history enabled him to analyse different currents of thought. He condemns the ancient religions and the catholicism of Middle Ages as anti-human. According to him in the former man was reduced to a plaything in the hands of heavenly forces and in the latter he was reduced to an abject degraded, and debased entity.<sup>1</sup> In his opinion the modern schools of thought which revolted against the previous tradition of anti-humanism have too failed to appreciate man's genuine problems and his status in the universe. According to Ali Shariati today's intellectual currents that claim to represent "humanism" can be divided into four categories : (1) Bourgeoisie liberalism, . (2) Marxism<sup>2</sup> (3) Existentialism and (4) Religion . He examines in detail the definitions and conceptions of man of these schools of thought only to find out that man was sacrificed in all these ideologies too. Rather, the more he was studied the more he became unknown. He writes :

"At present man is more enigmatic and more unknown than any other period. And ever since the end of nineteenth century, scientists writers and thinkers have evaluated man in various ways. Yes, man's position today is more shakier than any other period in history"<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cf. Ali Shariati, Insan Islam va Maktabha-i-Maghribi 'amin tr. by R. Campbell, Marxism and other Western Fallacies : An Islamic Critique (Berkeley : Mizan Press, 1980), pp. 17 - 21.

2 Ibid., p.17.

3 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam trs. by Dr. Fatollah Marjani Man and Islam (Houston Texas, 1981), p.46.

What Ali Shariati thought as the essential and primary cause of the failure of even the modern schools of thought in recognising the correct definition of man is that they emphasise only one aspect of man and ignore the other. For example, all these above mentioned four schools of thought believe in either materialistic world-view of spiritual (religious) world-view. Thus they conceive man either as a material being or a spiritual being. As for the first three philosophies - ~~Bourgeois~~ liberalism, Marxism and Existentialism, they believe in material world-view while the last, religion, believes in religious world-view. Both the two world views explain only one half of the man which is the greatest tragedy in history. There is a third world-view which, in his view, is intermediary between these two. That is Tauhidic world-view which is also the only ideology which encompasses both the aspects of man in itself. Ali Shariati's man is a two dimensional being and Islam is the only ideology which recognizes this aspect of man. Ali Shariati at first discusses in detail the two world views and compares them with Islamic world-view followed by a criticism of the above mentioned four schools of thought. According to him there are three basic characteristics which distinguish a man from other creatures :

"First, man is a conscious creature; namely he is the only creature in all of nature who had attained self-consciousness which I define as : "perceiving one's quality and nature, perceiving the quality and the nature of the universe and perceiving one's relationship with the universe". We are

conscious of these three principles.

Secondly, "Man is a chooser; namely, he is the only being who is not only capable of revolting against nature and the order which is ruling over him, but can revolt against his own natural, physical, and psychological needs. He can choose things which have neither been imposed on him by nature, nor is his body fit to choose them. This is the most sublime aspect of Ensaniat. Accomplishing such tasks is peculiar to God alone. Animals are mere machines whose instincts push them to all directions. For instance exactly once a year the sexual urges in a sheep emerge; this is a must and the animal has no choice. Once the appetite is gone the animal forgets its love. This is a deterministic characteristic in a sheep.

It is only man who can revolt, contrary to the demands of his nature. Despite his selfishness, he can commit suicide, and despite his natural instincts which call on him to protect his life and body, he sacrifices himself for others. Or, despite all the natural characteristics which call him to a comfortable life, he can revolt, sin, or resort to ascetism and piousness. These are indications that man is the only being who can choose."

Thirdly, "Man is a creature who creates; from the smallest to the largest thing is the manifestation of God's power in his nature. Unlike some who define man as an animal who makes tools, it is only man who can make things that go beyond tools.

Man's creativity emerges when his needs evolve to the point that what he wants does not exist in nature. This is indicative of the fact that man was created. So long as man is contented with what nature offers him, he is a natural animal which goes after what nature provides him. However, he reaches a point when nature alone cannot satisfy him; his needs and feelings evolve beyond the totality of nature's powers, creativities, and possibilities. This is the point at which, as Heidegger stated, "man feels lonesome" because he feels that he does not belong here, and realizes that his genus is different than its materialistic nature and that he is different from other animals. He feels that he is being attracted towards ideals which

do not exist in nature. Thus he wants to fly but nature did not give him wings; he beings to build a ship, plane, satellite, or space-ship."<sup>5</sup>

Elsewhere he elaborates the characteristics of man in the following words:

1.Man is a primary being. That is, among all natural and supernatural beings, man has an independent self a noble essence.

2.Man is an independent volition. This is his most extraordinary and inexplicable power: volition in the sense that humanity has entered into that chain of causation upon which the world of nature, history, and society are completely dependent as a primary and independent cause, and continuous to intervene in and act upon this deterministic series.

Freedom and choice, his two existential determinations, have imparted to him a godlike quality.

3. Man is an aware being. This is most outstanding quality: awareness in the sense that, through the wonderful and miraculous power of reflection, he comprehends the actualities of the external world, discovers the secrets hidden to these senses, and is able to analyze each reality and each event. He does not remain on the surface of sensibles and effects, but discovers what is beyond the sensible, and induces the cause from the effect. In this way, he both transcends the limits of his senses and extends his temporal ties into the past and the future, into times in which he has no objective presence; he acquires a correct, broad, and profound grasp of his own environment....

4.Man is a self-conscious being. This means he is the only living being possessing knowledge of his own presence. He is able to study himself and thus to analyze, know, evaluate, and consequently change himself - as a being independent of himself. Toynbee that great contemporary philosopher of history says: "Today's human civilization has arrived at the highest stage of its historical perfection, in that it is only

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5 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, pp. 50-51.

today's civilization that knows itself to be in decline!"

5. Man is a creative being. This creative aspect of his behavior sets him altogether apart from nature, and places beside God, it puts him in possession of a quasi-miraculous power that enables him to transcend the natural parameters of his own existence, grants him a limitless existential expansion and breadth and places him in a position to enjoy what nature has not given him.

It also gives him this power in relation to the heart of nature: what he wishes for that does not exist in nature he creates. Thus it was by this creative power of his that, in the first stage of his development, he produced tools, and in the second, the arts.

6. Man is an idealistic being, a worshipper of the ideal. By this is meant that he is never content with what is but strives to transform it into what ought to be. That is why he is constantly engaged in re-creating, and why he demonstrates that he is the only being not the product of but rather the producer of his environment or to put it simply, why he is constantly engaged in making reality conform to his idea. Thus, not only is he in a state of constant movement, movement toward perfection, but, in contrast with other living beings, he determines the course of his own evolution and can exercise foresight in relation to it.

Idealism is the major factor in human movement and evolution, it leaves no room for staying contentedly within the fixed confines of existing reality of nature or of ways of life. It is this force that constantly compels man to reflect, discover, research, realize, invent, and create, in the physical and the spiritual realm....

7. Man is a moral being. It is here that the very significant question of value arises. Value consists of the link that exists between man and any phenomenon, behavior, act, or condition where a motive higher than that of utility is at issue; it might be called a sacred



tie, as it is bound up with reverence and worship to the extent that people feel it justifiable to devote or sacrifice their very lives to this tie. Moreover, this is likewise worth considering: there is no question of a natural, rational, or scientific justification here, and also, this sentiment, as the most sublime existential manifestation of the human species is acknowledged in all religions and cultures throughout history as constituting the greatest of resources, the grandest of glories, the most precious of emotions, the most miraculous of events.<sup>6</sup>

According to Ali Shariati, the materialistic world-view upon which all these three modern humanist ideologies base their idea of man and the value system is "based upon the concept of originality of matter. This view consists of a collection of elements, relations, and action-reaction which are all materialistic. The world has only one element that is matter, which has no feeling, no volition and no specific purpose since in the scheme of materialism the world is not the consequence of a conscious and intelligent will."<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, "materialism as a human philosophy", writes Ali Shariati, "recognises man to be composed of material essence. With this definition it imprisons man within the evolutionary frame limited to being matter. If this is the case, it is impossible for him to evolve<sup>8</sup> beyond the capacity of the matter's dimensions itself".

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<sup>6</sup> Ali Shariati, Insan Islam va Maktabha-i-Maghribi Zamin, pp. 24 - 27.

<sup>7</sup> Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, p.13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.52.

While discussing these modern theories of humanism in detail, Ali Shariati, points out that the first two ideologies - Bourgeoisie liberalism and Marxism study man from the point of view of science or social disciplines. They define their concepts of human nature on the basis of the findings of these social and natural sciences. Broadly speaking, there are four such outlooks - Biologism, Sociologism, Historicism and Economism. Ali Shariati criticises these concepts in the following words :

"Historicism presents history as a single determinative material current that in its course constructs out of the material element, in accordance with the inexorable laws of historical process, some thing called man. Thus in the final analysis, historicism leads to a materialistic determinism in which man is a passive element.

Biologism which assigns precedence to laws of nature regards man just as it regards an animal, but sees him as the latest link in the chain of evolution; otherwise it looks upon all human spiritual manifestations and unique qualities as occasioned by man's physical constitution, like the natural instincts.

Sociologism views man as a vegetable growing in the garden of his social environment, and thus needing the proper climate and soil; it supposes that only as the garden is changed will the human harvest change, and that, as in the preceding case, this process operates according to scientific laws beyond possible human intervention, laws governing man's actions and even his personality"<sup>9</sup>.

In Ali Shariati's view a society based on these theories would naturally deny the spiritual and transcendental values of man. According to him morality and ethics cease to exist in these societies. He writes :

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9 Ali Shariati, Insan, Islam va Maktabha-i-Maghribi Zamin, p.24.

"... the materialists and naturalists who depend solely upon philosophical and scientific notions of sociology, psychology and anthropology do not hesitate to deny the existence of values, dismissing them as superstitious, vain suppositions, inherited habits, or social mores resulting from material forms, or as emotional states, originating in the physiology of this talking animal. With their merciless and unfeeling pseudo-scientific analysis, the realists corrupt the essential sanctity and virtue of values and vivisection them as one cuts apart a living, delicate system into dead substance and elementary material components.

Thus when confronted with a person who forgets himself in the pursuit of scientific discovery or who dedicates his life to his country, or chooses ideals over self-interest, or who ascribes greater value to beauty and goodness than to personal pleasure and advantage, the realists explain his feelings just as they would explain participation in a rite of circumcision".<sup>10</sup>

According to Ali Shariati, the scientific progress of the western societies has alienated man. He says :

"The material "needs" that are generated everyday and progressively find increase (So that the scope of consumption may be enlarged in quality and variety alike to feed the vast energies of production ...) transform people into worshippers of consumption. Day by day heavier burdens are imposed on a frenetic populace, so that modern technological prodigies, who ought to have freed mankind from servitude to manual labour and increase peoples leisure time, cannot do even that much, so rapidly have artificial material needs out placed the tremendous speed of productive technology. Humanity is every day more condemned to alienation, more drowned in this mad maelstrom of compulsive speed. Not only is there no longer leisure nor growth in human values, moral greatness, and spiritual aptitudes, but this being plunged head-long in working to consume and consuming to work ... has caused traditional moral values to decline and disappear as well".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 27 - 28.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 32 - 33.

Marxism, says Ali Shariati, emerged to destroy bourgeois system of thought in the west. It stood to liberate mankind from bourgeois exploitation of its moral and mental existence. According to Ali Shariati Marx vigorously condemned the bourgeois system as it degrades human values. In it man is exploited by a small capitalist class; even the higher moral values are so stipulated as to serve the interest of this class. But Shariati points out that in the final analysis Marx appears to uphold<sup>12</sup> the same view of man as adhered by his opponents. Marx, as he says, in the first phase of his life was almost a mystic when he lamented the<sup>13</sup> decadence and degradation of humanity and when he advocated higher values for man. Shariati admires the Marx of this phase. But he criticises the Marxist view of man in which Marx ascribes to man nothing than a materialistic origin and essence. He criticises Marx in the following words :

"Once again we find ... instead of human freedom from bourgeois bureaucracy, human captivity in a monolithic governmental bureaucracy ... instead of human liberation from capitalist economic administrative organization, human enslavement to a hyper-organized society; instead of an increase in human freedom, the molding of human society culture and morality ... Ideologically speaking, since the fall of humanism at the hands of the base materialism of economism, humanity, having lost its self-aware and sensitive will, which had meant the superior capacity of master existence, has become a pawn in a blind historical contest and the unwitting product of the material dialectics that governs it.

When we consider capitalism's liberated man and Marxism's man in fatters, capitalism's pseudoman and Marxism's molded man - can we say which one is more tragic ?"<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Ibid., p.43.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ibid., p.23.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.41.

Shariati developed keen interest in existentialism. His five years stay in Paris gave him an ample chance to acquaint himself with the ideas of the existentialist philosophers of France such as Jean Paul Sartre and others. Shariati had great admiration for existentialism and borrowed influences from it. But he also strongly criticised it because, in his views, existentialism leaves man without definition and identity. He gives an account of existentialism in the following words :

"In comparison with capitalism, which reconstituted man as an economic animal : comparison with Marxism, which found man an object made up of organized matter;... in comparison with Catholicism, which saw him as the unwitting plaything of an imperious unseen power (the Divine will); in comparison with dialectical materialism, which saw him as the unwitting plaything of the deterministic evolution of the means of production - existentialism made man a god. It paid him the grandest worship: "All the beings of this world realize their existence after their essence is determined, except man who creates his essence subsequent to his existence".

It is clear what the tree or talking parrot will be prior to its existence. but man is the first entity about whom it is unclear : what will he be ? What will he become ? What will he make of himself ? What will he choose for his essence ?

Man, therefore, is not God's creation nor nature's creation, nor is he the offspring of the means of production. Man is a god who creates himself. Given all the disrespect paid man by the Church, capitalism and communism, it is easy to see what an incentive this call could be to souls believing in the miracle of man.

In our time, it was natural that this call would be made by Sartre, a man who enjoyed the most forceful personality and literary style of all modern philosophers.

Yet Sartre suffers from the same contradictions ... the difficulty arises from the fact that this school centres its full weight on human action, and it is precisely here that it falls lame :

Man makes himself by his own act.  
What is meant by his own act?  
In a word choice. What is meant by "choice"?  
That to which human free will, itself arising  
from no external cause, divine or material,  
relates as a first or independent cause:  
affirmation or negation.

Here, apart from Sartre's inability to explain how this metaphysical will has spring into the materialists' universe and entered into the chain of material causation, a greater, indeed a very basic dialectical conflict arises automatically and proves insoluble, and that is that choice, however free and independent, must have some criterion, must take shape on the basis of values.

Thus, at this point we see arising that same old question of good and evil, or morals. Of course, Sartre is fully aware of the problems, and addresses it: What is "good"? What is "evil"? But Sartre, having carried the question of human choice to its metaphysical zenith, must provide some rule by which to distinguish good and evil; that is to say must specify some criterion for the choices human individual must make in practice.... This man, freed from God, nature and deterministic historical and environmental laws, possessing a quasi-divine free will, is still responsible as he puts this free will into practice, but responsible towards what? (This is second question mark left standing before Sartre!).

He struggles to answer these two questions, but unfortunately, in neither stance do we see any further evidence of his great reasoning powers, his sound logic, or his brilliant literary skill....

When we start by assuming a materialistic universe, Sartre - along with anyone else who wishes to exalt human freedom and dignity, to deliver it from the grasp of naturalism (the older materialism) or dialectical materialism (the new one), and to have man stand on the two feet of his own free will - inevitably either casts man back into the dungeon of unseeing, unconscious materialistic determinism, or else keeps him standing there, but vain and meaningless, with no purpose, while all human values go trumbling down - and with what terrible speed..

We hear : heaven is ideotic; existence is empty nature is blind, determinitive motion. Intelligence feeling direction and will are lacking in the universe. Existence has no particular meaning. In this terrible void, man, a stranger, thrown back upon himself, torn free from every bond, is a free will that must create its own meaning value goals and truth.

We see, however, that existentialism has given the individual a sportscar called Will and Freedom, while at the same time whispering in his ear, "There is really nowhere to go. But go wherever you like, knowing that whatever direction you choose, it is your personal choice - nothing more - and is otherwise no different from the direction anyone else would choose. since there is no civilization anywhere". There can be no doubt that such a gift is entirely worthless, and might even be termed a menace.

To make man, like God, a free will that can act in any way it wishes and then to answer the question "How should he act?" by saying "However he wishes" is to create a destructive vicious circle" <sup>15</sup>

Ali Shariati regards religion as the only ideology which admits spiritual essence of man. But he is critical of those religion which consider man as a purely spiritual being such as eastern religions which are based on mysticism. He writes :

"Religious world vision is comprised of the portrait of the universe in which every thing, like a country or organisation is run by a mighty power from the top. Such a power runs the firmaments, shaping creation and man according to its own desire; and so, we are as it wills, not as we want to be. Therefore, in the popular religions world, vision man is nothing. Mind you that the materialistic world, vision was already futile, lonesome and meaningless. But unlike the material world, vision, religious world-vision provides that the world has an omnipotent God. What is man then ? Naught but a toy and a spineless creature in the hands of God (or gods) which as bashed around at His (or their) will. Further in religious world, vision it is believed that man must not depend upon his own will and consciousness to and shape his fate, rather he should negate himself in front of God. We notice also that in the religion world-vision there is a fanaticism which leads to futility and unoriginality of man. In short, the religious world-vision, since its inception, culminates in the negation of man's true essence"<sup>16</sup>

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15. Ibid., pp. 44, 48.

16 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, pp. 15 - 16.

According to Ali Shariati mystics have laid so much emphasis upon the spirituality of man that they made human existence lost into that of the God. He describes Pantheism (Vahdat al-Vajud) as against Islam. Arguing with the Quranic verses he says :

"The Quran, moreover, repeatedly discusses the creation and composition of man in scientific, not philosophical, terms. No element of the divine essence exists in him, nor can it exist in him. God exists in man as a potentiality, a possibility, a direction in which man can strive toward God, absolute essence and infinite perfection. The profound verse. "Truly we are God's and to Him we shall return" (23 : 60), I donot understand as referring to death and the tomb, as do the commentaries commonly in use. These commentaries imply that only when we head for the tomb does God take possession of us, when His servants come and remove us from this world that is supposedly our property. Nor do I understand it like the pantheists, who interpret it in the sense of man becoming merged in the objective essence of God, like a bubble which, bursting, is reabsorbed into the ocean; his self fades away and he becomes immortal in God. The verse does not use the word fihi ("in Him"); it uses the word ilayhi ("to Him"). That is, we return to God, not in God; the verse is proposing an orientation of man toward infinite perfection".<sup>17</sup>

According to Ali Shariati only Islam offers a correct definition of man; only in Islam man is defined as a spiritual as well as a material being. He points out that in Qur'an two terms have been employed for man - "Bashar" and "Insan".<sup>18</sup> Bashar is the subject matter of biology, physiology and psychology. Chinghiz Khan is equal to Buddha and Jesus is equal to

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17 Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran), tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, p.92. .

18 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, p.46.



Hitler in this regard. Now, Insaniat varies in different proportions to each individual man. Every man possesses a different quality of Insaniat and is in the process of being Insan, more Insan or perfect Insa.<sup>19</sup>

Shariati's man is thus a two dimensional reality which, in his opinion is correctly presented in Islam. He illustrates his point of view from as he puts it, anthropological notions of Qur'an. He narrates the story of the creation of Adam who is the "representative of the human being" on the earth. This story does not present only the way how the man was brought into existence, but it also gives the basic philosophical Islamic idea about man. He describes the creation of man in the Qur'an in the following words :

"In the beginning the Lord addresses all the angels : "I want to create a vicegerent on earth", (Pay attention to the worth of man in Islam. Even the Post-Renaissance European humanism has not been able to bestow such an exalting sanctity upon man). God, being the greatest and the most exalting from a faithful Muslim point of view, addresses the angels to introduce His vicegerent. Thus, with this providential address the mission of man on earth is clarified. That is, man's mission on earth is to fulfill God's creative work in the universe. Therefore, man's first superiority is that he represents God on earth. The angels objected "Do you want to create a revengeful and vindictive creature to commit crime and blood-shed on earth again?" But God responds, "I know something you know not". And so, God became engaged in creating man. And this is the point which symbols, loaded with profound anthropological connotations, came into being. Since God wants to create a vice-gerent for Himself on earth, He must, as a rule, choose the most valuable and sacred material. Yet He selects the basest matter. In the Qur'an there are three references relative to the material that man was made of : from a sounding clay, like unto pottery and from mud. Finally, the Lord breathed His spirit into the dry mud and man came into being"<sup>20</sup>

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19 Ibid., p.49.

20 Ibid., p.3.

Shariati's concept of man is based on this story of the creation of man. He derived some fundamental conclusions from this story. First, he says that man is a compound of two different kinds of realities opposed to each other, the spirit of God (Ruh-i-Khuda) and mud (Lijn). Shariati puts it in a simplified form :

$$\text{Clay} + \text{Spirit of God} = \text{Man}^{21}$$

The spirit of God is the noblest, purest and the most exalted thing while the mud is the basest thing in the universe. Thus man in his origins has, on the one hand, purest thing and on the other hand he possesses basest element :

"In the human tongue God is the most sacred and exalted being, while mud stands as a symbol of the meanest and the basest thing. And the spirit of God is the most sacred, exalting, and the noblest "part" of His being. Accordingly, in creating man, God did not use His "breath", "blood", or "flesh"; rather He blew His own soul into man. God is the most sublime being and His spirit is the finest entity for which man can possibly have an epithet in his language. Thus, man who was formed from mud and God's spirit is a two dimensional being. For unlike all other things which are one dimensional, man is two-dimensional; one dimension tends towards mud, lowliness, redimentation and stagnation while the other aspires to the loftiest imaginable point possible. So man is composed of two contradictions - mud and God's spirit. Thus man's significance and grandeur lie in the fact that he possesses two poles (mud and spirit of the Lord). It is up to man to choose where to go, towards mud or providence. And as long as he has not selected either of the poles as his fate, struggle will perpetually rage within him"<sup>22</sup>

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21 Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran)., p.57.

22 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, pp. 3 - 4.

According to him the existence of these two contradictory elements<sup>23</sup> are possible in man because he is a dialectical being . He points out that the combination and resolution of two contradictory things in one is although not possible in logic but it is not only possible in dialectics rather it is a basic principles of dialectics. He writes :

"I am, of course, aware that the joining of opposites is impossible, as is also the resolution of contradictions. But these rules pertain to Aristotelian logic, formal and abstract logic. Dialectics, however, has nothing to do with abstract forms, only with objective realities; it discusses not the motion of the mind and intellectual forms, but the objective motion of natural phenomena. In the world of the mind, it is impossible for an object to be hot and cold at the same time, or to be both large and small. In nature, however, this is not only possible, but actually obtain. The intellect cannot conceive of a being simultaneously dead and alive, because death and life cancel each other out, but in nature death and life exist with each other and within each other; they are the two sides of single coin. A tree, an animal, a man, a social system, love, maternal tenderness - while all these are living and developing, they are also preparing their own old age and death. Hazrat Ali said : "The breaths a man takes are also the steps by which he advances toward death".<sup>24</sup> The breath of life itself is a progress toward death".

Another conclusion that Shariati derives from the above mentioned story is that man was considered noble for three reasons :  
(1) Knowledge (Consciousness) (2) Trust (Will) (3) Choice and creativity.  
According to him these three things are basic constituents of Islamic humanism. He says :

"Once man was created God taught him the names. It is not yet clear what these names were, but every commentator has said

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<sup>23</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran), tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, p.88.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.89.

something that leaves no doubt that God was talking about education and instruction. In any case when the creation of man ended, God taught all the names. Man became a possessor of names. At this point the angels protested : "We are made from smokeless fire but man was made from mud. Why should he has superiority over us?" Whereby the Lord responded : "I know something you know not. Bow down to man". The angels of all ranks prostrated themselves before man. This is what humanism is all about. Do you see the extent of man's grandeur ? So lofty is his position that the angels, in spite of their natural and racial superiority (light vs mud), adored Adam. However, since the angels protested, the Lord, in order to test them, asked them to recite the names but they could not answer. In this test the angels were defeated and the superiority and virtue of Adam was established. Superiority depends upon knowledge of the names. Man knows things which angels do not know. This is indicative of the fact that nobility depends upon knowledge and intelligence rather than upon racial superiority"<sup>25</sup>

"Another surprising point in man's creation in the Qur'an is that God calls upon the whole creation - skies, seas, plants, mountains, animals and so forth - and informs them: "I have a trust to offer you". But all of them refused to accept except man. This is indicative of the fact that man possesses another virtue; that is his acceptance of a trust that everyone else refused. This means that man is a representative of God in the universe as well as His trustee. As to what the 'trust' is everyone mentions something. Mawlavi believes that it is will and choice. So do I.

The only superiority that man has over all other beings in the universe is his will. He is the only being that can act contrary to his nature, while no animal or plant is capable of doing so. It is impossible to find an animal which can fast for two days. And no plant has ever committed suicide due to grief or has done a great service. Man is the only one who rebels against his physical, spiritual, and material needs, and turns his back against goodness and virtue. Further, he is free to behave irrationally, to be bad or good, to be mud like or Divine. The point is that possession of "will" is the greatest characteristic of man and it throws light upon the kinship between man and God.

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25 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islām, p.4.

Is it not true that God breathed His spirit into man and appointed him as His trustee ? Then man is a vice-gerent and "relative" of God on earth and the spirit of both quench their thirst from the same fountain of virtue-possession of will. God, the only being in the universe who possesses an absolute will and can do whatever He wishes, even to work contrary to the laws of nature, breathed His spirit in man. And so man is capable of working like God (not on par with Him, only resembling God), or acting against the physiological laws of his own nature"<sup>26</sup>

"Man is located between mud and providence, he is free to choose either as his will dictates. Possession of will and freedom creates responsibility. And so, from the Islamic point of view, man is the only creature who is responsible not only for his own fate but also has a mission to fulfil the Divine purpose in the world. Thus, he is a trustee in the universe. He (man) is the only one who knows the names whose meanings, I believe, stand for various scientific facts. Names are symbols for things; that is, the specific aspects of various concepts, therefore, "having learned the names" is the potential and aptitude for understanding and comprehending the existing scientific facts in the universe. Accordingly, through his primordial education from the Lord, man can grasp the totality of facts existing in the universe, this is the greatest responsibility. Man's fate must be fashioned by himself".<sup>27</sup>

Man is thus a two dimensional dialectical being. He is the noblest creature on the earth. He is half God and half mud. Man's movement is always in between these two poles. Ali Shariati thus describes man as a Free Will (Irada-yi-Azad) a pendulum (Tardeed) and a selection (Intikhab) in between these two poles,<sup>28</sup> he is a becoming

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 5 - 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 6 - 7.

<sup>28</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran), p.60.

(Shudan), a migration (Hijrat) and a search for understanding his self

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(Talash-i-Shinakht) :

"The distance between the spirit of God and putrid clay is the distance between two infinities; and man is a "hesitation", a pendulum between them, a free will faced with a weighty and difficult choice - the choice of the spirit, the spirit of God, while contained within putrid clay and buried beneath mud and sediment.

In one direction lies the highest of the high-perfection, beauty, truth, power, awareness, absolute and infinite will - higher and greater than anything that might be imagined, beyond all that is lowly, banal, contemptible common place and petty - this is the hereafter. In the other direction lies the lowest of the low - defect, ugliness, falsity, weakness, ignorance, absolute bondage, an infinite decline - viler, uglier and more egoistic than anything that might be imagined - this is this world.

And in fact we see that men known to us have risen so far in brilliance of spirit, splendor, beauty, awareness, virtue, purity, courage, faith and generosity and integrity of character, that they leave us amazed. No being material or immaterial, angel or jinn, has the capacity for similar growth. At the same time, we see other men who in their vileness, impurity, weakness, ugliness, cowardice and criminality have descended lower than any beast, microbe or demon. Man may attain the infinite in vileness, ugliness and evil just as he does in perfection, nobility and beauty. One extremity of man touches God; the other, the devil. Man is situated between two absolute possibilities, each situated at two extremities. He is a highway leading from "minus to the power of infinity" to "plus to the power of infinity". Facing him, traced out across the plain of being, is a highway leading from an infinitely vile minus to an infinitely exalted plus. He is a free and responsible will: he is both a will obliged to choose and the object of his own will and choice. To use the terminology of Brahmanism, he is the way, the wayfarer and the wayfaring. He is engaged in a constant migration from his self of clay to his divine self.

Man, this compound of opposites, is a dialectical being, a binary miracle of God. In his essence and life-destiny, he is an "infinite direction", either toward clay or toward God... but where is God ? God is in infinity. Man, then, can never attain a final resting place and take up residence in God. The distance between clay and God is the distance that man travels in his search for perfection; but he travels unceasingly, in ascent and upward striving to Him who is infinite, unbounded and unlimited. Thus the movement of man is from infinite lowliness toward infinite exaltation, and the destination is God, the spirit of God, eternity; it is impossible for him ever to stop.

How disgraceful, then, are all fixed standards who can ever fix a standard ? Man is a "choice" a struggle, a constant becoming. He is an infinite migration, a migration within himself, from clay to God; he is a migrant within his own soul".<sup>31</sup>

#### CHAPTER - IV

##### ALI SHARIATI ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF ISLAM

One of the most attractive subjects of study for Ali Shariati was sociology. It was for this reason that he was very prone to discuss Islamic ideas and beliefs in sociological terms. He always evaded even purely theological notions to be discussed in religious framework. He himself says:

"In researches pertaining to Islam, I believe in a definite principle. I feel that this principle is true to all the discussions regarding religion and Islam. Thus instead of analysing the belief or a religious dogma from scientific or logical point of view or from theories of physics and chemistry or from scholasticism or philosophy and testifying its truthfulness or falsity in this form or through that means like classical or modern Ulama, we should adopt a principle, more satisfying from the point of view of truth, and more useful from the point of view of social life."<sup>1</sup>

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1 Ali Shariati, Intizar-i-Mazhab-i-I'teraz (n.p., n.d.), p.17.



It may be a matter of controversy whether Ali Shariati was successful in evolving a new concept of sociology of religion but it is a fact that he made a bold attempt to discover sociological notions in the Qur'an and other Islamic sources. He writes:

"Since my field of study is sociology of religion and the project is connected with my work, I have tried to codify a kind of sociology of religion based on Islam and drawing on the terminology of the Qur'an and Islamic literature. In the course of my work and research, I came to realize that there are many totally untouched topics that we have not even imagined existed. One of the facts encountered in my study of Islam and the Qur'an was the existence of scientific theories of history and sociology peculiar to the custom and method of the work of the Prophet. What is implied here is something different from taking the Qur'an, certain verses of the Qur'an the philosophy and certain methods used by the Prophet, or the political social psychological and ethical system of life of the Prophet and then analysing them by means of contemporary science. We might, for example, try to understand the cosmological verses of the Qur'an in the light of sociology. What I mean is something quite different; namely that I extracted from the Qur'an a whole series of new topics and themes relating to history, sociology and human sciences. The Qur'an itself, or Islam itself, was the source of ideas. A philosophical theory and scheme of sociology and history opened themselves before me, and I later checked them against history and sociology. I found them to be fully correct."<sup>2</sup>

The main objective of Ali Shariati in this regard seems to be two-fold: first, to prove that Tauhid is a social phenomenon and not

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<sup>2</sup> Ali Shariati, Ravish-i-Shinakht-i-Islam Tr. by Hamid Algar. On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 42-43.

merely a theological tenet; and secondly, to prove that Tauhid is the only philosophy that can produce a classless and just society and that it is the only philosophy which can resolve contradictions in the society. The whole discussion of Ali Shariati is based upon the concept of Tauhid or in his own words, "world-view of Tauhid." He claimed that sociology is one of the dimensions of Tauhid itself<sup>?</sup>.

The methodology adopted by Ali Shariati is firstly to describe the various social theories as propounded by different philosophers particularly of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Europe and secondly to make a general criticism of their ideas from the Islamic point of view. In the second half of the nineteenth century sociology began to be systematically studied in Europe, particularly after August Comte who is supposed to be the father of modern sociological thought on account of his study of this subject as a science. In France, this branch of knowledge created relatively more interest perhaps because it happened to be its birth place. During the twentieth century several schools of sociology came into existence and a number of social philosophies were propounded. There were, however, some basic issues upon which they concentrated their attention. Ali Shariati's exposition, too, revolves around some of these questions.

According to him, 'society is a part of history and history

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? Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran) (n.p., n.d.), p. 158.

is the name of 'continuous movement with the time'. Thus society, like<sup>4</sup> history, is a continuous process<sup>5</sup>. One of the fundamental issues for the sociologists is to find out the laws of social change or to trace out the basic factor behind the transformation of society as they all believe that society moves along with time and never remains static. It also involved certain laws of motion on the lines of which it moves. There are a number of theories as to what are the basic factors which bring about change in society. One can roughly summarize them into four schools. Ali Shariati attempts to find out their compatibility with the teachings of Islam.

Shariati writes that there is a theory which says that the important individuals are the principal factors behind any social change. Whenever great individuals arise suddenly a revolutionary change takes place in society. Great personalities are always at the head of a civilization. Carlyle and Emerson are the staunch supporters of this view. Emerson's saying that "give me the names of ten powerful personalities, and I will<sup>6</sup> tell you the whole human history without ever studying it" may be considered as the crux of this theory. Thus social change, according to this opinion

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<sup>4</sup> Islam Shanasī (Tehran), Tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

rests in the hands of powerful personalities like Reformers, Prophets, and spiritual guides. Ali Shariati is critical of this view as according to him it is incompatible with the Qur'anic concept of change. He writes:

"Now from the point of view of Islam, the prophet is the greatest of all the personalities; and if Islam were to believe in the role of the prophets as the fundamental factor in social change and development, it would have to recognize all the prophets, and especially the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) as constituting that fundamental factor. We see, however, that this is not the case. The mission and the characteristics of the Prophet are clearly set forth in the Qur'an and it consists of the conveying of the message. He is responsible of conveying the message; he is a warner and bearer of glad tidings. And when the Prophet is disrupted by the fact that people do not respond and he cannot guide them as he would wish, God repeatedly explains him that his mission consists only of conveying the message, of inspiring fear in men and giving them glad tidings, of showing them the path, he is not in any way responsible for their decline or development; for it is the people themselves who are responsible.

In the Qur'an, the Prophet is not recognized as the active cause of fundamental change and development in human history. He is depicted rather as the bearer of the message whose duty is to show men the school and path of truth. His mission is then complete, and men are free either to choose the truth or to reject it, either to be guided or to be misguided.... If personalities are mentioned in the Qur'an, other than the Prophets their mention is frequently joined with a sense of condemnation or distaste. Even if they are mentioned for their righteousness and purity, the Qur'an never considers them as an effective factor in their societies."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-48.

There is another group of sociologists who believe that changes are brought about by a group of people consisting of the elite of the society. According to him this is nothing but another kind of hero worship:

"The worshippers of personality can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of those who believe that a great personality like Buddha, Moses or Jesus appears and changes human society. They are the pure hero worshippers.

The other group consists of those who believe that initially a personality appears and then he is joined by a group of the elite, the outstanding geniuses of his people, so that a team comes into being. It is this elite team which directs society on a path and to a goal of its own choosing. This group might more correctly be called elite-worshippers."<sup>8</sup>

Accident has also been regarded by some sociologists as the principal factor of change in the society. But the most important and rationalistic theory in this regard, according to Ali Shariati is the theory of scientific determinism(falsafa-i-taqdir-i-Ilmi)<sup>9</sup>. He says that this view got relatively more popularity amongst the late nine-

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion on this subject by Ali Shariati see "Falsafa-i-Ilmi Tarikh". Eleventh lesson in Islam Shinasi (Tehran).

teenth century and twentieth century sociologists, especially among those philosophers having materialistic worldview. According to this view, history moves according to certain fixed and determined laws of nature.. Thus negating the possibility of any external factor causing decisive impact upon human society. Describing the views of this group, Shariati says:

"Another group is composed of the materialists and those who believe in historical determinism. They believe that history and society from the very beginning down to the present, are like a tree, devoid of any volition. In its origin it was a seed. Then it emerged from the seed, appeared above the ground put forth roots, stems, branches and leaves and grew into a great tree, compelled to yield fruit, to wither in winter, to blossom again in spring, to attain perfection and to decay. This group believes that human societies traverse a long life through out history in accordance with determining factors and laws that play human society exactly the same role as the laws of nature in the natural realm."<sup>10</sup>

Ali Shariati is not completely against this theory. He tries to find out its compatibility with the Quranic text. In fact his own concept of Jabr-e-Tarikh is more or less based on this view. He<sup>11</sup> wrote a number of articles in elucidating this concept.

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<sup>10</sup> Ali Shariati; Ravish-i-Shinakht-i-Islam Tr. by Hamid Algar. On the sociology of Islam, pp. 45-46.

<sup>11</sup> See Ali Shariati, Jabr-i-Tarikh (n.p., n.d.); Tarikh va Arzish-i-Aan dar Islam (n.p., n.d.); Insan dar Tarikh (n.p., n.d.).

According to him, Islam does not regard man as an immutable entity, but a living organism. Moreover, he does not regard him a living organism just like plants and trees, but that he is a self-conscious and responsible being.<sup>12</sup> In fact, these two theories - 'determinism' and 'indeterminism' have been supposed to be the two opposite poles in sociological thought. But the Qur'an has created a reconciliation between them. He says:

"In sociology, these two principles are apparently contradictory - on the one side, the responsibility and freedom of man in charging and developing his society; on the other side the notion of a determining, fixed, scientifically established law, one unaccessible to human intervention, and providing the immutable basis for the society. But the Qur'an looks upon these two poles - the existence in society of determining fixed and immutable laws, and the collective and individual responsibility of man for social change and development - in such a way that not only are they not contractory, they even compliment each other."<sup>13</sup>

For Shariati, however, the role of volition and free will in deciding the fate of society of man is more important than the deter-

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12 Ali Shariati; Islam Shinasi (Tehran), p. 148.

13 Ali Shariati, Ravish-i-Shinakht-i-Islam Tr. by Hamid Algar On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 50-51.

mining laws. So far as the question of the fundamental factor of change in society is concerned, it is the people who enjoy this position. Shariati emphasises that it is one of the unique characteristics of Islam that it accepts the importance of the people and their participation in shaping their destinies. He says:

"No school of thought, not even democracy in its ancient or modern forms, claims that the masses are the fundamental factor in social development and change. Democratic school of thought believes that the best form of government is that in which the people participate, but from the time of Athenian democracy down to the present, none of these schools has believed that the broad masses of the people are the decisive factor in social change and development. The most democratic of sociologists, then, even while believing that the best form of government and of administrative and social organisation is that in which the people participate by casting their votes and electing the government, do not regard the "people" as the basic factor of social change and development. Instead, they regard determinism, great personalities, the elite, mere chance or divine will as the decisive factor."<sup>14</sup>

This idea is supported by quoting verses from the Qur'an which deal with human responsibility and freedom of choice such as :

1. For them shall be what they have earned, and for you shall be what you have earned.<sup>15</sup>
2. Verily, God does not change the state of people until they change the state of their own selves.<sup>16</sup>
3. Every soul is accountable for what it has earned.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.47. . .

<sup>15</sup> Qur'an, (2 : 134).

<sup>16</sup> Qur'an, (13 : 11).



Commenting on these verses, he says that these verses which hold man responsible for his actions, admits the freedom of will and action which goes to prove that they are not completely determined, instead, they possess the authority to change the course of history and society. While the Quranic verse which says 'God does not change the fate of those (or society) who do not change the fates of their own' proves that man is the only factor who can bring about change in society. The Qur'an unlike other religions always addresses the people as a whole and not any particular group, nation, tribe, or community. This is very significant for him. Even more significant is the term "al-Nas" used by the Qur'an for this purpose. He derives some important conclusions<sup>18</sup> from the logic of the term 'al-Nas'! He points out that there are some other words which might have been used by Qur'an for the same purpose. Such as "Bashar" and "Insan". But these are used in the Qur'an only to denote animal and human instincts of man respectively. The term 'al-Nas' means people or more accurately "masses".<sup>19</sup> The word masses means the collectivity of individuals or the people. He writes :

"In general, those addressed by every school of thought, every religion, every Prophet also constitute the fundamental and effective factor of social change within that school. It is for

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18 Cf. Ali Shariati, Ravish-i-Shinakht-i-Islam, tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 50 - 52.

19 Ibid., p.49.

this reason that we see throughout the Qur'an address being made to al-nas, i.e. the people. The Prophet is sent to al-nas: he addresses himself to al-nas; it is al-nas who are accountable for their deeds; al-nas are the basic factor in decline - in short, the whole responsibility for society and history is borne by al-nas.

The word al-nas is an extremely valuable one, for which there exist a number of equivalents and synonyms. But the only word that resembles it, structurally and phonetically is the word 'mass'.

In sociology, the masses comprise the whole people taken together as an entity without concern for class distinctions that exist among them or distinguishing properties that set one group apart from another. "Mass" means, therefore, the people as such, without any particular class or social forum.

Al-nas has exactly the same meaning i.e. the masses of the people, it has no additional meaning. The words 'Insan' and 'Bashar' also refer to man, but they refer to ethical and animal properties respectively.

From this we deduce the following conclusions :

Islam is the first school of social thought that recognizes the masses as the basic, the fundamental and conscious factor in determining history and society - not the elect as Nietzsche thought, not the aristocracy and nobility as Plato claimed, not great personalities as Carlyle and Emerson believed, not those of pure blood as Alexis Carrel imagined, not the priests or the intellectuals, but the masses.

We can fully realize the value of this point of Islamic doctrine only when we compare it with other schools of thought. To whom do the various other schools of thought address themselves? Some of them address themselves to the educated and intellectual class; others to a certain selected group within society. One addresses itself to a superior race, another to superman while yet another focuses its attention on a certain class of society, such as the proletariat or the bourgeoisie.

None of the privileges and distinctions assumed by these schools exist in Islam. The only fundamental factor in social change and development in the people, without any particular form

of racial or class privilege, or any other distinguishing characteristics"<sup>20</sup>

According to Ali Shariati, just as there is a complete freedom of choice for man in Islam, the masses have also the same degree of freedom of choice. So far as man's action is limited by the natural laws, the role of the masses are also limited by fixed historical laws. But in Islam the position of the masses is always pre-dominant. In other words

"An agricultural engineer has the responsibility of cultivating trees and plants in an orchard the responsibility of ensuring that they bear the best possible fruit, the responsibility of trimming and irrigating the plants and trees. In all of these matters he has freedom of choice .... But at the same time, we see that certain laws exist in botany, and it is on the basis of these determining and immutable laws that change and development take place in plants and trees.

In accordance, then, with his degree of knowledge and information, man can make use of these laws inherent in the plant, laws which are in themselves unchanging. Agricultural engineer can never establish new laws of botany, nor can he abolish any of the existing laws of botany. Those laws pre-existing in nature, impose themselves ineluctably upon the agricultural engineer. But while he can not change them, he does have the ability to manipulate the fixed practices and laws of botany by means of scientific invention, and thus to benefit from the existing laws which he can not change. On the basis of a new form, one lying fully within the scope of existing laws, he can transform an inferior or average fruit into a superior one.

The responsibility of man in society is exactly similar. Society just like the orchard has been established on the basis of God given norms and patterns, and its development and evolution is also founded on them. But at the same time man is

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 48 - 49.

responsible and he cannot divest himself of his responsibility through reliance upon Khayyamian fatalism or historical determinism, thus ridding himself of accountability for the destiny of society. For while stating that society is indeed founded upon immutable laws, the Qur'an does not deny human responsibility. According to the school of thought that the Qur'an represents, man has the responsibility of correctly recognizing the norms of society and improving those norms for the advancement of his society"<sup>21</sup>.

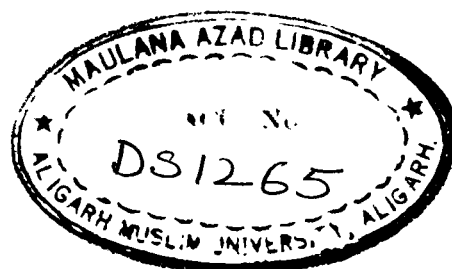
The role of great personalities as the decisive factor has been denied by Islam, but his role as an individual is not denied. Although each individual is equal in degree regarding his role as a factor of change, the role and contribution of a great personality becomes bigger than that of a common man. Therefore, he may be a 'bigger factor' of change. The role of prophets, philosophers, reformers, kings and others constitutes an important factor in comparison to common man. Their roles are in proportion to their knowledge of the laws of nature and history<sup>??</sup> so that they can, by utilising them, produce greater impact on the society than a common man can do who has no average knowledge of these laws. The prophets are more privileged in the sense that they receive revelation (Wahy) and scripture :

"Personality is not in itself a creative factor in Islam. Even the prophets are not regarded as persons who have created new norms in the existing societies. From the point of view of

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21 Ibid., pp. 51 - 52.

22 Ibid., pp. 52.



sociology, the superiority of the prophets to other teachers - apart from the rank of prophethood itself - is that they have recognized the divine norms that exist in nature and the world better than mere reformers, and on this basis they have been better able to make use of their freedom as men to advance their aims in society. It is a truth fully attested by history that the prophets have always been more successful than reformers who were not prophets.... The prophets, by contrast, have built new societies, civilizations and histories. It is not that they have established new norms in opposition to divine laws as the fascist and hero-worshipper might say - but rather, through the power of prophethood and extraordinary talent they have discovered the divine norms existing in society and nature, and through the exercise of their will in conformity with these norms, they have performed their mission and attended their goal".<sup>23</sup>

Accident or chance is also accepted as a factor of change in society in the above sense. He admits that 'a certain form of accident, understood in a particular sense, does exist in human life. For example Chengiz Khan appeared in Mongolia, comes to power in accordance with the social norms and assembles a large force around him. But the defeat of Iran at the hands of Chengiz Khan is an accident; it was quite possible for it to not have occurred. Accidents of this type may very well affect the destinies of certain societies'.<sup>24</sup> Thus according to his opinion Islam recognizes the roles of four factors in the process of change and transformation of a society in their own way. These are (1) great personalities (2) accident (3) determined historical laws and (4) people.<sup>25</sup>

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23 Ibid., p.53.

24 Ibid., p.53.

25 Ibid., p.50.

These four factors vary in degrees in different cases. Their proportional influence in a society 'depends on the circumstances of the society. In a society where al-Nas, the masses of the people are advanced and stand at a high level of education and culture, the role of personality is reduced, but in societies that have not reached that level of civilization, for example, a tribe or a clan, the personality of the leader may be influential. At each different stage of society, with respect to the progress and backwardness, one of the four factors mentioned will have more effect than the other three'.<sup>26</sup>

In his writings Ali Shariati has also dealt with such topics as "social structure" and "class structure" or "social class" of the society as discussed by the nineteenth and twentieth century sociologists. The former is referred to as Zeerbina or Zeerbina-i-Ijtimai and the latter as Tabaqa-i-Ijtemai.<sup>27</sup> The crux of his thought in this regard is that only 'ownership' (Malkiat) could be considered as social structure and that there are only two types of 'structures' (zeerbina) in the society, because there are only two kinds of ownership - social ownership (Malkiat-i-Ijtimai) and monopolistic ownership or individual and private ownership (Milkiat-i-Inensari).<sup>28</sup> In the beginning he explains the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.54.

<sup>27</sup> Ali Shariati, Machine lar Asarat-i-Machinism (Europe & U.S.A., 1356 A.H. Solar), p.12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.18.

meaning of some of the fundamental terms so often used in his works such  
as zeerbina and rubina.<sup>29</sup> According to him, society consists of zeerbina  
and rubina. "Zeerbina is that upon which every other thing depends while  
rubina is that which is dependent upon zeerbina. Zeerbina is a cause in  
itself, while rubina is changeable according to zeerbina".<sup>30</sup> The change in  
the society depends upon the kind of relationship that exists between the  
two - zeerbina and rubina. If there is a change in zeerbina it is a  
revolution, while if there is a change in rubina only it is just a reform.<sup>31</sup>

Ali Shariati is of the view that the superstructure cannot be done  
away with by simply saying that it is the manifestation of the mode of  
production. As both economy (production) and ideology interact, they could  
influence each other. He says :

"Thoughts, religions, forms of beliefs, ideologies and creeds,  
generation and time have a direct influence not only on the  
societal institutions such as tribe, politics, professions, liveli-  
hood and work, it has also direct influence on social production  
as well ....

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29 At times it is very difficult to distinguish the term zeerbina  
from the other terms. Besides, he gives a different meaning of the term  
at different places. He was perhaps, aware of this ambiguity. In one of  
his books he tried to remove this ambiguity, but he was not successful  
totally. Cf. Ali Shariati, Bazgash (Europe, 1357 A.H. Solar), no. 421 - 22.

30 Ali Shariati, op. cit., p.13.

31 Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran), p. 159.

What should be ascertained in this is that a group which wants to bring about change in society, drives the society towards a new form of production and a new kind of structure. At the same time it also drives it towards a new thought, a new philosophy and a new kind of faith. By this I mean that superstructure also influences mode of production and social structure".<sup>32</sup>

According to Shariati, in backward societies of Asian and African countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was imperialism which caused structural change not the mode of production which was dependent upon imperialism.

In the backward countries zeerbina (i.e. production) meant rubina i.e. imperialism. Imperialism itself determines the forms of production. When imperialism appeared in African countries, -these countries were still passing through the age of Abel and Cain (primitive society). Suddenly modern industrial productive system or industrial capitalism was imposed upon these societies. We see that it was not the mode of production which brought about change in those societies, it was rather imperialism.<sup>33</sup>"

As a matter of fact Shariati does not believe that the society can be divided into watertight compartments. So the zeerbina and rubina of a society are not quite independent phenomena. They could not be studied separately and independently from each other. This view emanates from the fact that Shariati had a quite different concept of society. According to him, the human society is like a personality or a human personality. Just as natural and scientific laws could not be applied for defining man as he is a complex personality so is the case of society. He writes :

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32 Ibid., pp. 166 - 170.

33 Ibid., p. 171.



"When I talk of society (Jamia) I mean a person (Shaks), conscious, thinking and sensitive being who possesses will, faith .... Society is not the agglomeration of individuals, it is rather a composition of individual elements ... Society is a collective conscience. It is not like a crowd in a cinema or gathering in an examination hall. It is not a store of grain which is nothing but collection of wheat and barley. Society, therefore, is not a collection of personalities. It is itself a person and a man"<sup>34</sup>

He illustrates this by giving the example of sulphuric acid 'which is nothing but composed of sulphur, oxygen and hydrogen. But at the same time it is neither sulphur nor oxygen'.<sup>35</sup> Thus, in his view, in understanding a society, only understanding of its different components separately will not help. We have to study them in totality which influence each other. They are not quite independent of each other. He concludes :

"What I know as social structure (Bin-e-Ijtemai) is neither economy, nor ideology, nor will, nor any other thing. Social structure of a society consists of composition of its material and nonmaterial elements which make the personality of a society. Just as we cannot understand an individual by only knowing the quantity of his wealth, type of profession, form of work, his education, his past, his race, his creed and faith and his environment. We have to analyse these elements in their quality and quantity .... Same is the case with a society. It will be quite superficial and one-sided if we understand a society in the same way as a historian understands history, or as Max Weber understands religion and philosophy

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34 Ali Shariati, Bazgasht, p. 53.

35 Ibid., p. 55.

or as Spengler understands culture or a fascist understands species, or as British Marxist and Stalinist understands economic structure and economy of consumption"<sup>36</sup>.

Ali Shariati says that he agrees fully with the theory of seven stages of the society as propounded by modern sociologists (1) Pastoral economy, (2) slavery, (3) serfdom, (4) feudalism, (5) bourgeoisie.<sup>37</sup> (6) capitalism and (7) socialist economy. But, without making any change in it, he disagrees with the idea that the changes that have taken place from one society to the another were structural (zeerbina) and that all of them are social structures. In his opinion, slavery, serfdom, feudalism, bourgeoisie and capitalism were not different social structures. He says :

"I do not regard slavery, serfdom, bourgeoisie, feudalism and capitalism as constituting social structures. These are all part of superstructure of the society. Marx has put all these five stages - together with a special stage he calls the Asiatic mode of production - on the same level as primitive socialism perfect socialism (i.e. the classless society that is ultimately to come into being) he has regarded them as all belonging to the same category and designated them as all "structures". According to Marx, when the village Khan becomes the urban Haji and the peasants become workers a change takes place in the structure of the society, just like the change that occurred when the common ownership of the sources of production gave way to private ownership, with one group owing everything and another group lacking every thing .... In my opinion Marx has mixed certain criteria in his philosophy of history so that his classification

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36 Ibid., p. 54.

37 Cf. Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran), tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 112 - 114.

of the stages of social development has become confused. He has confused three distinct entities, the form of ownership, the form of class relations, and the form of the tools of production"<sup>38</sup>

In Shariati's view the first and the last stage - pastoral economy and socialist economy - represent as one structure, while the other five stages - slavery, serfdom, feudalism, bourgeoisie and capitalism - form another structure. Thus basically there are only two social structures :

"We can see clearly that the first and seventh stages are characterized by the same structure, as are the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth stages. Throughout history, then, only two structures have existed and it is not possible for there to be more than two. For example, the structure existing in feudalism and industrial capitalism is the same; in both cases we see private ownership of the tools and resources of production. Again in both cases, the social structure is based upon class; the only differences are the tool of production, the form of production. The converse also holds true : It is possible for the tools, forms and relations of production to be the same, but for the structure to be different. For example, a society that engages in agricultural production, with tools that are unchanged, that has no notion of industry or capitalism and no developed bourgeoisie, may establish a socialist structure, a system of collective ownership, by means of revolution, war with external forces or internal coup d'etat"<sup>39</sup>

Elsewhere he says :

"Here, I abide to a particular view which is this that basically zeerbina is two; not more than two. They represent neither bourgeoisie, nor feudalism nor capitalism, nor machinism,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 111 - 112.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

nor serfdom and slavery. Zeerbina, that is upon which the whole social system is based ... is only two, not six or seven: one is monopolistic ownership (Malkiat-i-Inhesari) and other is social ownership (Malkiat-i-Ijtimai). If it is in the form of monopolistic or individual ownership, it is one kind of social structure, if it is in the form of social (ownership), it is another kind of structure"<sup>40</sup>

Thus, one of the social structures represent collective ownership which means a class-less society and the other represents monopolistic ownership which means a class-ridden society. The former is called 'zeerbina-i-ijtimai' (socialist society) and the latter 'zeerbina-i-<sup>41</sup>Tabaqati' (class society) . It is only ownership, therefore, which makes a distinction between social structure and class structure. In Quranic terminology, the former is called Abelian society or structure of Abel and the latter is called Cainian society or the structure of Cain : <sup>42</sup>Unto the time, there was no conception of private ownership, there existed only one structure in the society. There was no ownership in the nature, the people exploited the nature collectively and divided the products among themselves according to their needs. Shariati calls this stage of human development as Abelian society :

"Before coming to the age of civilization, man lived the life of a savage by hunting in the forest and fishing in the seas. The forest were within the reach of every body. Nobody had monopolized the rights of men free gifts of nature. No one suspended the rights of the others. Every man was treated as equal and brothers. People differed in skill and power in hunting but there did not

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<sup>40</sup> Ali Shariati, Machine dar Asrat-i-Machinism, p.17.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Iran), tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, p.111.

exist any difference of status, individual ownership, and deprivation of others. There was no monopoly, no domination and no competition." <sup>43</sup>

Ali Shariati believes that the society got divided into two classes when the primitive society entered the stage of civilization. This coincides with the stage of cultivation, because cultivation or production involved many other things, such as, ownership of land, tools and produce. Slowly there emerged a class which possessed all these things while the majority of people remained dispossessed, who gradually, became dependent upon the small group who owned means of production. He writes:

"When ownership became monopolistic, it divided the society into two opposite economic classes. The relationship between these two economically opposite poles developed in accordance with the development of history and society .... Philosophy, modes of thought and culture changed but the fundamental factor behind these changes was the ownership.

Thus, in my opinion there existed only two structures and there could not be more than two structures : One is that in which all the possible resources, tools and goods for the consumption of the society were available to the people. The other is that in which all these things were monopolized by few individuals and the people became dispossessed. Hence structure of the society can be divided into two classes : Social (Ijtimali) or class (Tabaqati).

Socialist society (zeerbina-i-Ijtimali) is the structure in which every society could utilize the material resources. While class society (zeerbina-i-Tabaqati) is the structure in which ownership becomes monopolistic. This divides the society

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<sup>43</sup> Ali Shariati, Shirk va Tauhid (Tehran, 1358 A.H. Solar), p.13.

into two opposite poles"<sup>44</sup>.

Shariati believes that five structures - slavery, serfdom, feudalism, bourgeoisie and capitalism formed the structure of Cain. He regards them as stages of society (Dauraha) with superstructural changes.<sup>45</sup> He says :

"In the structure of ownership, superstructures (rubina) change. Superstructures are slavery, serfdom, proletariat, bourgeoisie. Bourgeoisie itself is not a structure. It is superstructure (rubina). It is correct that the form of relationship between the ruler and the ruled was different during the period of slavery from that of the period of serfdom; their relationship was relatively better. Similarly the relationship between these two classes changed during the period of feudalism and so on. But this class relationship (Ravabta-i-Tabaqati) cannot be termed as the structure of the society. Structure of the society only means either in the form of collective ownership or monopolistic ownership. I was a slave in the beginning and my owner was the master. Then I became serf and my owner became my lord. Then I became peasant and my master became the landlord. Now I am a worker and my master is an employer .... Names have changed; my name has also changed. Once I was Khan, now I have become Haji Khan. Structure did not change until and unless my status was changed or my relationship was changed"<sup>46</sup>.

According to Ali Shariati primitive society or the Abelian society was based on Tauhid. While the class society or the Cainian society was based on Shirk. He derives his arguments from the Quranic story of Adam,

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<sup>44</sup> Ali Shariati, Machine dar Asarat-i-Machinism, p.18.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 19 - 20.

Abel and Cain. He says that when Adam asked his two sons - Abel and Cain - to bring their dearest things for the sacrifice of God, the former brought a camel while the latter brought grains. The camel symbolized the form of life in primitive society while the grain<sup>47</sup> symbolized cultivation, i.e. the society based on ownership.

According to him, the Canian structure is divided into two social classes (Tabaqat-i-Ijtimai) : The Cain's class (Tabaqa-i-Qabeel) and the Abel's class (Tabaqa-i-Habeel). The class of Cain consisted of exploiters, private owners, rulers and privileged people. The class of Abel consisted of the dispossessed, exploited, and deprived masses (nas). The former is always in minority but dominates the latter. The latter is always in majority but is exploited by the former.

Again, the class of Cain is composed of three classes (Tabaqat) Zor, Zar and Tazveer i.e. the forces of political power, the forces of economic exploitation and the forces of religious exploitation. In the Qur'anic terms they are called : malik or mala, mutrif and ra'ib respectively. He explains these two classes in the following words :

"It is possible, then, to divide society in accordance with these two structures, into two poles, the 'pole of Cain' and the 'pole of Abel'.

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<sup>47</sup> Ali Shariati, Shirk va Tauhid, p.16; see also Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, p.18.

1) The pole of Cain. The ruler-king, owner, aristocracy. In the primitive and backward stages of social development, this pole is represented by a single individual, a single force that exercises power and absorbs all three powers (king, owner and aristocracy) into itself; it represents a single visage, the visage of Cain. But at later stages in the development and evolution of the social system, of civilization and culture and the growth of the different dimensions of social life and the class structure, this pole acquires three separate dimensions and presents itself under three different aspects. It has a political manifestation - wealth and a religious manifestation - asceticism.

In the Qur'an, the pharaoh is the symbol of the ruling political power; Groesus (Qarun) is the symbol of the ruling economic power; and Balaam is the symbol of the official, ruling clergy. They are the threefold manifestation of the single Cain.

These three manifestations are referred to in the Qur'an as mala' mutrif and rahib, meaning respectively the avaricious and brutal, the gluttons and the overfed and the official clergy, the long-bearded demagogues. These three classes are constantly engaged in respectively dominating, exploiting and deceiving the people.

2) The pole of Abel. The ruled = God - the people confronting the threefold class of king-owner-aristocracy is the class of the people, al-nas. The two classes have<sup>48</sup> opposed and confronted each other throughout history".

"The wing represented by Abel is that of the subject and the oppressed i.e., the people, those who throughout history have been slaughtered and enslaved by the system of Cain, the system of private ownership which has gained ascendancy over human society. The war between Cain and Abel is the permanent war of history which has been waged by every generation. The banner of Cain has always been held high by the ruling classes and the desire to avenge the blood of Abel has been inherited

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<sup>48</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Turan), tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 115 - 116.



by succeeding generations of his descendants - the subjected people who have fought for justice, freedom and true faith in a struggle that has continued, one way or another, in every age. The weapon of Cain has been religion, and the weapon of Abel has also been religion".<sup>49</sup>

Ali Shariati traces the existence of the above mentioned three forces ( zor, zar and Tazveer ) in every society. He claims that throughout the history these three forces have always joined hands in the exploitation (Istismar) of the people. In his book Hossein Varis-i-Adam he points out that in each society the Cainian structure (of the Cainian class) contains these three classes. In Sassanid society, for example, there<sup>50</sup> were three kinds of the fire of Ahuramazda. In India these three classes<sup>51</sup> are represented by Kshatriya, money lenders and Brahmins respectively. They used three weapons for the exploitation Tegh, Tala and Tasbeeh<sup>52</sup> (sword, gold and Tasbeeh) symbolized in Istibdad, Istismar and Istihmar<sup>53</sup> (despotism, exploitation and the deception of the clergy) .

He discusses the third face of the Cainian structure i.e., the class of religious people in detail and shows how religion has always been instrumental in exploiting the people and serving the cause of the exploiters:

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51 Ibid., p. 26.

52 Ibid., p. 31.

53 Ibid., p. 25.

"We notice that throughout history religion has always been in everyone's heart, in Cains as well as Abel's. But it has particularly been used as means in the hands of the clergy; that is the Balaan Baura. Look all over, in Hinduism, in old Persia in Rome and in Greece, these three personages always existed in a single body; a trinity as described by Catholicism, there is one and one in three. How can one believe it? It is like Mawlvis poem, "From the wine-less bottle seek bottle-less wine" which means nothing. But if you ponder a bit it starts to make sense."

We tend to think trinity as one God who has three features. But in reality this is the ruling class in history which appears as a single class containing three features; the clergy, Pharoah and Croesus fought Moses as a single unit. These three features of the Canian order will continue to rule history.

As economy and power have always been in the hands of a special class, religion as a means, has always been in the groups of the spiritual class, where? Next to money and force. And the masses have always been captive of this clergy which has been guiding and steering history to its advantage. As masses are forced into submission by money and exploitation they are simultaneously drugged with religion. Specifically, one grabs the masses head, the second robs its pocket and the third whispers in their ears: Do not bother. Be quiet, God will take care of it tomorrow."<sup>54</sup>

He further says that the religion has always been used to justify and protect status quo:

"The religion of Shirk always attempted to justify the status quo by means of metaphysical beliefs, belief in gods and goddesses, belief in life Hereafter, belief in sacred things; misinterpretation and distortion of hidden forces

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54 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, p. 20.

and distortion of religious principles.... The racial differences and class system are consolidated by religion. The status quo remains intact and attains eternity through religion.... It created ignorance (Jahal) and fear (Tars) among the people. Because knowledge creates awareness among the people and they stand against the status quo, while religion (of shirk) protects and retains status quo."<sup>55</sup>

He points out that in Qur'an Cain has been described as a religious man because he offered sacrifices to God.<sup>56</sup> It was this role of religion in the history of mankind on account of which it was condemned by modern philosophers and sociologists as a destructive ideology that exploited man and the religious world view was described as "opium of the people":

"The characteristic of all the religions, as critics of religion say, has been contradiction, ownership and superiority of one class over the other. In fact what they say is correct. Religion has been the opium of the people (Tiryak-i-Tudeh), because it accepts the humiliation, poverty, ignorance and suppression of the people in which their fathers and forefathers lived."<sup>57</sup>

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55 Ali Shariati, Mazhab Alayh-i-Mazhab, pp. 17-22.

56 Ali Shariati, Insan va Islam, p. 19.

57 Ali Shariati, Mazhab Alayh Mazhab, p.19.

He further says:

"What the intellectuals of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries have said about the religion that it is the opium (Tiryak) for the people was correct. But which religion? They studied and analysed the history of religions and reached the conclusion that the religion has always betrayed the masses. However, they should have said that the religion was the factor which provided religious justification for the rule of the minority over the majority from sociological and economical point of view. It also provided religious justification for status quo in a feudal society. Religion has played this role in each and every society. ... One can cite plenty of examples. If you study history you will find what was the role of religion in it. For example, look at the ancient Iran.... In Sasanid society religion ruled the society directly, even the monarchs and princes were ruled by the clergy (Mobadan) and religious institutions. There existed class contradictions; nobody could reach the status of upper class from lower class by whatsoever means. The foremost class of the Sasanid society consisted of princes and aristocracy. The second class (Tabqa-i-Dom) consisted of the spirituals (Ruhaniyyun) of the zorostranism i.e. mobadan. Some time the former predominated over the latter, some time the latter class dominated over the former. Both these two classes were part of mala and mutrifin and those who ruled over the people. The former exploited them through power (zor) while the latter exploited them through religious deception. The wealth of the people was in their control. Some times even the clergy owned more wealth than the kings.

The third strata of the Sasanid society consisted of artisans, workers and other subjects. The people (Tudah) were dispossessed of any thing. They were thought to be impure (Najis). They were not given any social rights.... What did the mobadan of Sasanid society do? Mobadan interpreted the contradiction and multiplicity of the society. They said there are three kinds of fire, (Fire was the manifestation of God Ahuramazda). Ahuramazda had three manifestations in the life (1) Azargushab in

Azerbaijan, (2) Azarbarzeen Mahar in Sabzvar, and (3) Azar Istakhar in Fars. Now Ahuramazda had a class structure. The fire of Azargushab created kings and princes (the ruling classes); the fire of Azar Istakhar created mabadans and spirituals (the class of religious hierarchy); and the fire of Azarbarzeen Mahar created peasants (the oppressed class)....

We find that even in the most sacred religion or religious philosophy, the attributes of the God or the gods are based upon race, class and family. This was justified and interpreted by the religion. Because at that time people were religious.... In fact the religion of Mala was the opium of society. It justifies the class system in this way: it says you have no responsibility because every thing is in the hands of God. Do not worry about your ill-fate, because elsewhere you will be rewarded. Therefore, here in this world Caesar is everything. The function of religion was this that if there arose a protest from any group of people, it should be silenced. How? The religion would say whatever happens, it is what God has intended. Therefore, any protest will be protest against God."<sup>58</sup>

However, Ali Shariati says that the views mentioned above are not true in regard to Islam which is a religion of Tauhid. Although Islam is also one of the religions of the world but it is different from other religions in many respects. He divides religions into two categories: Religion of Shirk and religion of Tauhid. Just as the former advocated the Cainian structure - the structure of class, discrimination and contradiction, the latter advocated Abelian structure - the structure of no class, no contradiction. Thus

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-39.

referring to the conflict of Abel and Cain, he writes:

".... That the general conclusion to be drawn from the text of the story and the dialogue between the two brothers and their respective forms of behaviour as well as the views of the narrators of the story - this being the Qur'an and also the Christian and more particularly Jewish texts, not to mention books of exegesis, history and Islamic lore - the conclusion to be drawn from all of these is that Abel is presented as the type of good and Cain as the type of evil. I use the word 'types and not character, for the latter would imply that Cain possesses only evil characteristics such as lust and materialism and that Abel possessed only good characteristics such as religiosity and sensibility. No one of them is the complete manifestation of an evil man, and other of a good man ....

Abel was a man, a "son of Adam", neither more nor less. All the texts that relate this story present him in this light. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that he lived in a society without contradiction and discrimination; his work was free and unfettered - "He was neither mounted on a camel, nor laden like a donkey; neither a master of slaves, nor servant to a king. He was merely a man. In a society where all enjoy equality and possess in common all the bounties of life, all the material and spiritual resources of society, all will necessarily be equal and brothers, and the spirit of salubrity, beauty, kindness, purity, sincerity, love and goodness will be cultivated".

Cain is not inherently evil. His essence is the same as that of Abel, and no body is inherently evil for the essence of everyone is the same as the essence of Adam. What makes Cain evil is an anti-human social system, a class society, a regime of private ownership that cultivates slavery and mastery and turns man into wolves, foxes or sheeps. It is a setting where hostility, rivalry, cruelty and venality flourish; humiliation and lordship - the hunger of some and the gluttony of others, greed, opulence and deception; a setting where the philosophy of life is founded on plundering, exploitation, enslavement, consuming and abusing, lying and flattering; where life consists of oppressing or being oppressed, of selfishness, aristo-

cratic arrogance, hoarding, thievery and ostentation; where human relations are based on the giving and receiving of blows, on exploiting or being exploited; where human philosophy consists of maximum enjoyment, maximum wealth, maximum lust, and maximum coercion; where all things revolve around egoism and the sacrifice of all things to the ego, a vile, crude and avaricious ego".<sup>59</sup>

According to Ali Shariati, three forces of exploitation were always opposed by Tauhid. Tauhid never justified contradiction, pluralism or class system. Because 'Tauhid in its social dimension aims to remove all sorts of contradiction, dualism, pluralism from the society'. Tauhid always stood and fought against the forces which exploit the people, because it represents the interest of the people. Unlike other religions the religion of Tauhid fought against status quo. He quotes examples from history to show that the prophets of Abrahamic religion always struggled to free mankind from the Qainian exploitation :

"One of the characteristics of the religion of Tauhid is that it is a revolutionary ideology, it protests against status quo; while the characteristic of the religion of Shirk is to justify it. Tauhid gives each individual who believes in it and who is brought up in its school a critical outlook (Beenish-i-Intiqadi), in every walk of life - material, spiritual and social.

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<sup>59</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran) tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 106 - 107.

<sup>60</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi, p. 183.

It also gives people a mission and a responsibility to destroy or change whatever they donot like and whatever is false (Batil) and to replace it by what they think truth (Haq). The basic characteristic of this religion (the religion of Tauhid) is that it does not provide religious justification for the status quo. If we look into the mission of all the Abrahamic prophets, we find that they fought against the status quo to destroy it ....

Look at the Moses's mission. Moses fought against the three symbols (of Cainian structure) Carosus, the greatest capitalist of his time, Balaam Baura, the greatest among the religious authorities of his time, and Pharoah the symbol of political power of his time. He fought against the status quo because status quo patronized the system of humiliation and captivity of the masses. It was the war (Mobareza) of superiority of one race over the other. It was a war against the social system in which a particular race was ruling over the other. Its aim was to free the masses from captivity ... to construct a new society in which forces of class and contradiction were eliminated"<sup>61</sup>

Ali Shariati points out that the prophets of religion of Tauhid belonged to the class of common man, unlike other religions in which the prophets always belonged to upper classes. He says most of these prophets were shepherds and thus represented the people. They lived with the people therefore they knew the misery and problem of the people. He also says that Tauhid never encouraged but destroyed the spritual hierarchy. He says :

"Islam has abolished all forms of official mediation between God and man, and the Qur'an mentions the third manifestation of Cain - the official clergy - with harsh words, even going far as to curse them and compared them to donkeys and dogs. The prophet of Islam said: "Any beard longer than a man's hand shall be in hellfire" and he also commanded man to keep short their

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61 Ali Shariati, Mazhab Alayh-i-Mazhab, pp. 14 - 15.

62 Cf. Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Mashhd) tr. by A.A Sachedine, Visage of Mohammad (Tehran, 1980), p.24.



sleeves and the gems of their garment. All of this is a sign of the struggle that Islam has waged against the concept of an official clergy that exists in all religions, and the attention it has paid to their deviationist role in stupefying the people and distorting the truth. What is important to remember is that Islam has no clergy; the word clergy (ruhaniyun) is recent, a borrowing from christianity. We have scholars of religion, they do not constitute official authorities who impose themselves by way of heredity or monopolistic power. They are simply specialized scholars who have come into being in Islamic society as the result of a necessity, not on an institutionalised basis. They derived their influence, presence and power in society from the people and free and natural choice of the members of society. They are normal individuals, either students who piously study religion with effort and endurance of hardship or scholars who teach and conduct research."<sup>63</sup>

Ali Shariati points out that the prophets of Islam always opposed the official clergy :

"The greatest force against Moses which tried to hamper the movement launched by him consisted of Samari and Balaan Baura, who was Samri ? ... Balaan Baura was at the top in the ranks of clergy. He tried to stop Moses in influencing the people through his religious ideas. Therefore, there was a great war between the two .... Look at Jesus. He faced humiliation betrayal deception, opposition and contempt from the religious clergy. He was killed on the Cross by these religious people. They were not atheists and materialists .... Look at the prophet of Islam. Those who fought against him at Badar, Uhud and Makka were not atheists. They too were religious people. They fought against the prophet because they knew that the prophet will destroy their idols and their gods. Hence, the slogan of every prophet was a 'War against the religion'."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran) tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 115 - 116.

<sup>64</sup> Ali Shariati, Mazhab Alayh-i-Mazhab, pp. 11 - 12.

In a unique interpretation of the word "al-Nas", Shariati claims that Allah symbolizes the masses. He claims that in the verses of Qur'an pertaining to social matters, the word Allah means people or masses. He gives the following interpretation of the two terms, Allah and al-Nas.

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"In Torah and Bible and in the Qur'an, without exception, everywhere the rank of God and the rank of the people (Saf-i-Khuda va Safa-i-Nas) are identical. In all the verses pertaining to social, economical and political problems, and not to the verses pertaining to scientific or philosophical problems, the word Allah could be replaced by the word Nas, and similarly, the word Nas could be replaced by the word Allah. It will make no difference. Take for example the verse 'Man Yuqrid Allah Qaradan Hasanan'<sup>66</sup> It means those who lend money to God. Does it mean so? Could anybody lend Him anything? Therefore, it means people give goodly loan to the people. On the basis of this in all the social problems and verses and even traditions in which social problem are discussed God is used in place of people. He stands in the ranks of the people"<sup>67</sup>

Ali Shariati believes that the Qur'an has given a very high status to the people :

"If we study the Qur'an, we can find, at a glance that the Qur'an begins with the word Allah and ends with the word al-Nas. The addressees of the Book are the people. Thus Islam is the religion of God and people (Deen-i-Khuda va Mardam). Allah and Nas are supposed to be identical, in the sense that in all the

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65 He says those manuscripts (Nuskaha) of Torah and Bible should be consulted which have not been distorted. Cf. Ibid., p.24.

66 Qur'an (64 : 17 ).

67 Ali Shariati, op. cit., p.24.

verses pertaining to economical, social and human problems the word Allah could be replaced by the word al-Nas and vice-versa. For example, the Qur'anic verse 'Al-Mal Li-Allah' means that money belong to God. But the God of Islam is unlike the ancient gods of other religions who needed money and the following were required to offer money in temples in form of worship. Here Al-Mal Li-Allah means 'Al-Mal Lil-Nas' i.e. the money belong to the people. This is not my interpretation. I am not saying this under the influence of modern thoughts. This is the interpretation adopted by Abu Dharr Ghiffari who told Muawiyah : You say 'Al-Mal Li-Allah' because you want to usurp the money of the people. You say 'Al-Mal Li-Allah' that is money belongs to Allah and not to the people because you are the representative of God so you mean that the money belongs to you.

Abu Dharr told Muawiyah that Al-Mal Li-Allah means 'Al-Mal Lil-Nas' (money belong to people). It does not mean that money belongs to the monarch. Money (Mal) does not belong to certain individuals. It belongs to the generality of the people. God owns money means people own money. Because people and God are in the same ranks. The Qur'an says 'Al-Nas 'Aval-li-Allah' which mean the people belong to the family of God"<sup>68</sup>

At another place he gives the following interpretation of these verses :

"In affairs of society, therefore, in all that concerns the social system, but not in cradal matters such as the order of the cosmos, the words al-Nas and Allah belong together. Thus when it is said "Rule belongs to God" the meaning is that rule belongs to the people, not to those who present themselves as the respresentatives or the sons of God .... When it is said "Property belongs to God" the meaning is that capital belongs to the people as a whole, not to Croesus. When it is said "Religion belongs to God" the meaning is that the entire structure and content of religion belongs to the people; it is

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68 Ibid., pp. 31 - 32.

not a monopoly held by a certain institution or certain people known as "clergy" or "church" .... The kaaba is the House of God, but the Qur'an also calls it the "house of the people" and the free house (Al-Bayt al-Atiq) ( 22 : 29, 32) as opposed to other houses that are in the bond of private ownership. We see here that the word al-Nas does not denote a mere collection of individuals. On the contrary, it has the sense of society as opposed to individual. The word al-Nas is a singular noun with the sense of plural; it is a word without a singular. What word could better convey the concept of society, something possessed of an identity totally independent from all of its individual members"<sup>69</sup>

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69 Ali Shariati, Islam Shinasi (Tehran) tr. by Hamid Algar, On the Sociology of Islam, pp. 116 - 117

## CHAPTER - V,

### ALI SHARIATI ON ISLAM AND SHIISM

Ali Shariati is of the view that the Shiism as practised today does not represent the real Shiism. It has been distorted by both - the rulers and the clergy for their own vested interests. In his book Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi, he vehemently criticizes the Safavid monarchs and the Safavid clergy. The book highlights the sharp contrast which exists between the original shiism and the distorted shiism. The former is termed by him as Alavid Shiism (Tashayyu-i-Alavi) and the latter as Safavid Shiism (Tashayyu-i-Safavi). According to Ali Shariati, the contemporary Shiism represents the latter kind of debased shiism. The entire effort in the book is to

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1 Ali Shariati, Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi (n.p., 1352 A.H. Solar), p.46.

provide conceptual basis for genuine shi'ism, i.e. Alavid Shi'ism

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and condemn distorted shi'ism i.e. Safavid Shi'ism :

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2 Shah Ismail was the founder of the Safavid dynasty, which he established in 1501 A.D. The origins of the Safavids are obscure. However, it is known that Safiuddin (1252 - 1334 A.D.), after whom the dynasty was named, established his Khanqah (hospice) in Ardabil towards the end of the thirteenth and in the beginning of the fourteenth century. He started a sufi order named Safaviyya. Later, in fifteenth century his followers entered into politics. His successor Junaid (1447 - 59 A.D.), followed by Haider, was more a warrior than an ascetic. They travelled all through the region and in the process succeeded in gaining considerable following in the masses. In their political struggle, they had to face many setbacks in the beginning. Both Junaid and Haider were killed one after the other. Ali, the successor of Haider, was also killed in a battle against Aq-Qoyunlus and the ruler of Shirvan combined troops in 1494 A.D. But Ali's brother Ismail proved to be a tough fighter. He, after some year's disappearance, during which he reunited the Safavid forces mainly the Qizilbash and Turkaman tribes, defeated his arch rival Aq-Qoyunlu and the ruler of Shirvan. In 1501 he captured Tibriz which he made the capital of his small domain. Based in Tabriz, Shah Ismail started continuous expeditions against his enemies all around him. Iran at that time was divided into small principalities owing allegiances to either the Ottomans or Abbasid caliphate in Egypt. He defeated these small rulers one after the other and consolidated his power in the region. There were two main enemies of the Safavids besides these small rulers. On the one hand, there were Ottomans in the West and Uzbek rulers of Transoxiana in the east, on the other hand. By 1504 A.D. Ismail had already captured Hamadan, Shiraz and Kirman. The major success for Ismail came when he defeated the Uzbek ruler Sheybani Khan twice who was captured and killed. By 1510 the boundry of the Safavid empire was touching the Ottoman territory; he had extended his territories up to Baghdad, Tokharistan, Sistān and the whole of Khurasan by that time. These successes led the Safavids to boast that their empire was approaching the territories of once glorious Sassanid empire. However, it was not a matter of continuous success. They were defeated again and again in the process at the hands of the Ozbeks.

But the most serious threat was envisaged from the Ottomans, particularly after the ascension to the throne of Sultan Salim I, the Grim, in 1512 A.D., Salim, ambitious and expansionist turned his attention towards the Safavids soon after his ascension over the throne. He ordered his armies to march towards the Safavids to put to an end the Shia advancement. After eliminating the Shiites in Anatolia, his artillery entered into Azarbyjan and advanced successfully as far as Tibriz, the capital of Shah Ismail. But any how Shah Ismail was able to regain his territories soon after the Ottoman army marched towards the West.

In this book he traces the history of Shi'ism and tries to show . . how the Safavid rulers distorted it with the help of the clergy. According to him it can be traced to the political rivalry of the Safavids against the Ottoman caliphate and Arabs and the Ozbek rulers with whom they fought. All their enemies happened to be the Sunnis. Thus according to Shariati, it was political animosity that led Shah Ismail to establish his empire on two distinct principles : (1) Shi'ism (Mazhab-i-Shii) and (2) Iranianism (Millat-i-Irani), because his enemies were Sunnis and non-Iranians. By propagating Shi'ism and Iranianism he intended to make a separate identity of Iranians religiously and nationally. Ali Shariati writes :

"It was the great manipulation on the part of the Safavids that they established their rule on two basic principles :- (1) Shi'ism and (2) Iranianism; these two basic principles cut Iran apart from the great Islamic society and put it against the Ottomans who were the rival power of the Safavids" .... Safavids propagated Iranianism to make Iran a force against the Islamic Caliphate i.e. the Ottoman Caliphate"<sup>3</sup>

Ali Shariati points out that by propagating Iranianism they<sup>4</sup> wanted to get support from the Iranian people. The Iranian people

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3 Ali Shariati, Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi, p.111.

4 Ibid., p.56.

would have been united against the Turks, Arabs and Ozbeks more easily by the slogan of Iranian nationalism (Qaumiāt-i-Irani). Thus the  
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Safavids revived the Shu'ubia philosophy which was launched under the same circumstances for the similar cause. The Shu'ubia movement was launched to emphasise the racial identity of the non-Arabs vis-a-vis Arabs by the political enemies of the Arab rulers. Safavids revived and encouraged it to emphasise the racial and traditional identity of the Iranians vis-a-vis Arabs, Turks and Ozbeks. The Shu'ubia movement declined in the following centuries. For Shariati it was due to the immense spiritual power of Islam. He writes :

"Although the humiliation of the Iranians by the Arabism (Arabiya) of the Umayyad Caliphs helped to pave the ground for the emergence of national consciousness (Azāhi-i-Milli) and Shu'ubi nationalism (Nasionalism-i-Shu'ubia) in Iran, but the disappointment of the people and the intelligentsia of Iran from Zoroastrianism and the Sassanid system which had earlier led to accept Christianity, Buddhism, Manicism and Mazdakism and the need of the Iranian society for a fresh belief and a revolutionary philosophy specially the spiritual power of Islam was the only powerful answer to this need, could not let Shu'ubism to get the upperhand. Although

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5 According to Ali Shariati, in the beginning Shu'ubia propagated equality of all races Arab or non-Arab. But gradually they turned to define the superiority of the non-Arabs vis-a-vis the Arabs. It was mainly do to the reaction of the Umayyad discriminative policies which emphasised superiority of the Arabs over the non-Arabs. Shu'ubism emphasised upon the Sassanid heritage and the heritage of ancient Iranian civilization. Ali Shariati, Tashayyu-i-Alavi Va Tashayyu-i-Safavi, p.111



shu'ubism grew strongly but it could not develop its roots in the form of popular institutions. Thus Shu'ubism continued to exist during the post-Islamic period of Iran in indirect and rudimentary form but it was soon dried up and died"<sup>6</sup>.

According to Ali Shariati, Safavids were well aware that pure nationalism will have to face the same destiny as Shu'ubism. One of the reasons why Shu'ubia movement disappeared was that it depended only upon pure nationalism. This nationalism for Shariati was only the worship of the past. It highlighted the prestige of the great Iranian kings, superiority of the father land and people of Iran. They revived only those values which were against the values of Islam. While the need of the people was a progressive and revolutionary philosophy, especially a true leadership and justice which have been the two pillars of shi'ism.<sup>7</sup> Instead of promoting shi'ite thought they wanted to revive the old values which the people detested. The Safavids, aware of this fact, mixed up nationalism with religion. Shariati explains this phenomenon in his own peculiar manner.

"To ensure that Safavid Nationalism (Nasjonalism-i-Safaviyya) might not prove to be rootless and ineffective in the manner of shu'ubi nationalism, they mixed it up with Islam which was the religion of the people. They made it shiite Shu'ubism (Shu'ubi Shi'i) so that through shu'ubism (Shu'ubigari) the

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6 Ali Shariati, Op. cit., p. 112.

7 Ibid., p.112.

Shi'ism of unity was changed into the shi'ism of disunity while Shi'agari revitalized Shu'ubism and gave it religious sanctity. The Prophet and Ali were made racists (Nazad Parast) and fascists. The result was a new born Prophet-king (Payghambar-Padshah) who was the marriage of nationalism and religion (Qaumiet-Mazhab).

It is generally believed in the Shia world that the son of Imam Hossein and the fourth in the chain of Imams, Imam Sajjad (Ali b. Hossein b. Ali) was born from Shaharbano, the Iranian princess, and the daughter of last Sasanid monarch Yazdgird as she was married to Hossein. This belief is held by most of the Shiite sources. Ali Shariati is of the opinion that this is not true. The whole story has been purposefully forged. The many related stories and traditions supporting this story are found only in Shia sources. The story of the marriage of Shaharbano with Hossein is interesting and has been a matter of debate among the scholars.

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8 Ibid., p.113. It is difficult to translate literally Shu'ubigari or Shi'agari into English. Even a nearest equivalent is difficult to find out.

9 The story as described in one of the most authentic sources of shia theology, Al Usul Min'l-Kafi by Abi Ja'afar Muhammad b. Yaqub Al Khlayni Al-Razi (d. 329 A.H.) is as follows :

"... Abi Ja'afar said : when the daughter of Yazdgird was brought to Umar, ... he looked at her. She covered her face .... Umar said : 'You abuse me' and came near her. Then Ali said to Umar : It does not look good of you. You should get her married with a good muslim and give her money from Bait al-Mal. She chose Hossein b. Ali. Ali asked what is your name ? she replied Jahan Shah. Ali said, 'No Shahar Bano! Then he turned to Hossein and said : Your son from Shaharbano shall be noblest on the earth. Ali b. Hossein was born from them. Hence Ali b. Hossein was called the son of the two noblest descendance i.e. the noblest descendant of Hashim and noblest descendant of Iranian. Abul Aswad al-Dawli says about Ali b. Hossein that the son of Hashim and Ceaser is noblest one". Cf. Abi Jaafar Muhammad b. Yagub al-Kulagni, Al-Usul Minal Kafi (Tehran), 1334 A.H. Solar), vol.1, p. 467

When the prisoners of the battle of Madain during the reign of Umar, the second caliph, were brought to Madina, the prisoners included also the daughter of the defeated Sassanid ruler Yazdgird. As she was brought before the Caliph Umar, the Caliph wanted to kill her according to one version, while the other version says that he wanted to sell her as it was usual to sell the prisoners. Whatever be the truth<sup>10</sup>, it is said that Ali came to her rescue and said that it is not proper to sell the daughter of a king. She should be married to some muslim and the mahar should be paid from the public treasury. The story further says that Shaharbano chose Hossein the son of Ali, and therefore, she was married to him. She gave birth to a child who later on became the fourth Imam. There are some other traditions also in this connection. For example one says that Shaharbano had embraced Islam even before she was brought to Madina and that she embraced Islam at the hands of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet and her would be mother-in-law in a dream. A brief conversation between Shaharbano and Ali is also reported by Imam Sadiq in a mixed Persian and Arabic dialect. Ali Shariati reproduces it as follows :

Ali	:	What is your name ?
Yazdgird's daughter	:	Jahanshah
Ali	:	No, (perhaps your name is) Shaharbano

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10 Cf. Ali Shariati, op. cit., pp. 113 - 127.

Yazdgird's Daughter : She is my sister  
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Ali : Right

Ali Shariati finds several inconsistencies in these narrations. He challenges the authenticity of this event on historical grounds. He feels no hesitation to call it as a deliberate fabrication and that it was basically meant to connect racially the Iranian heritage with the prophet.

Following are some of conclusions drawn by Ali Shariati as implications of this false narrations :

1. Umar who overthrew the Sasanid empire was at logger heads with Ali.
2. Eradication of Sasanid empire was done by Umar, not by Islam.
3. It is caliphate which was against Sasanids; Imamate defended it.
4. Sunnism (Umar) was the enemy of Sasanid empire (Shaharvano); shi'ism (Ali) were its friend.
5. Islam came into Iran not through Muslim conquest; it came rather due to the marriage of Shaharvano with Imam Hossein.

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11 Ibid., p.117.

6. Yazdgird, humiliated by Umar, got nobility by coming into the household of the prophet.
7. The daughter of Yazdgird was married to Hossein not with any other because the chain of Imamate was to continue through Hossein.
8. All the nobility and praise of Ahl.-i-Bayt was shared with the Sasanid dynasty.
9. Continuity of Imamate ensures the continuity of Sasanid heritage.
10. Prophetic religion was mixed up with the religion of<sup>12</sup> Ahuramazda.

Ali Shariati says that this false story and many other such stories were purposefully fabricated and propagated. The purpose was to separate Iranian identity from its mainstream and to create animosity between the Iranians and the rest of the Muslim world. According to<sup>13</sup> Ali Shariati, a fulfilled propaganda programme was planned. Imam Sajjad

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12 Cf. Ibid., pp. 127 - 129.

13 Ibid., p. 126.

(Ali b. Hossein b. Ali) was portrayed as the most dignified Imam, the first in the chain of dual-raced Imams. Because he was 'he first to inherit both Hashimite and Sasanid qualities. The 'so called' Iranian origin of the Imam was more highlighted than Arabian. Rather his Iranian origin overshadowed his Arabian succession. Ali Shariati points out, too, why Fatima who was the sole link between prophecy and Imamate was overshadowed by Shaharbanu to make the latter the link between Imamate and Sasanid heritage. Shariati writes :

"Such a dual Imam was a boon to the Safavid Shi'ism - which was the reappearance of ruins of 'old Iranianism' in the 'new religion'; the representative of Iranian government into the Islamic Imamate; the incursion of remains of Ceaser into the house of the prophet, ... consequently a new Shu'ubi-shiism was invented which was a complete contradiction and duplicity, a compound of king and prophet; 'between Ceaser and Hashim' : Imam Sajjad".<sup>14</sup>

Ali Shariati gives a vivid account of the attitude of the Safavid monarchs towards Shiism in the following words :

"The Safavid clergy cooperated with the rulers and justified the movement of Iranian Nationalism (Qaumi-iat-i-Irani) through the religion of the shia .... They put a green robe of religion on Nationalism .... The religious justification of nationalism and the revival of the Iranian racism in the guise of Shiism resulted in the alienation of Iran from the rest of the Islamic world. It created animosity between the Iranians and the Turks and Arabs.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

It was basically a political rivalry between the Safavid regime and the Ottoman caliphate. It divided the Muslim community (Ummat) into two distinct parts the Sunnis and the Shi'a.

The propaganda machinery of the Safavids exaggerated the differences between the Shi'a and the Sunnis and concealed the common elements of them. They interpreted Shi'ism in a particular way to isolate it from the Sunni world - culturally, socially, religiously and nationally .... They (Safavids) not only changed the meaning of the belief of Imamat but also tried to interpret the Qur'anic concepts of Tauhid, Prophethood and the life Hereafter in such a way that these can be differentiated from Sunni interpretations. For example, they made changes even in the rituals such as pilgrimage and prayer so that in the mosque and in Hajj they should not have anything common with the Sunnis.

The Safavid clergy made so many changes in the interpretations of the Qur'an that it became a book of contempt of the caliphs.... They acted in the same way as the ulama and theologians of the Ottoman empire did. The Ottoman ulama on the other hand also made changes in the interpretation of Qur'an, tradition and fiqh that the Shi'a became infidals, like the Christians and Jews. They said that it was permissible to marry with a Christian or a Jew lady because they are the 'People of the Book' (Ahli-kitab), but it was not permissible to marry a shi'ite girl because she was infidel.

Just as the Safavids needed a Iranian Shiism (Tashayyu-i-Iran) to fight against the Ottomans, similarly, the Ottomans Turkish Sunnism (Tasannun-i-Turkiyya) to fight against the Safavids .... The Safavid Shiism (Tashayyu-i-Safavi) mixed with Iranian nationalism created a new movement. It assembled the two elements of shiism and Iranian in itself so much so that they became inseparable. This can be termed as nationalist 15 Shiism (Tashayyu-i-Milli) or Shi Nationalism (Millat-i-Shi'i) .

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15 Ibid., pp. 133 - 135.

Ali Shariati vehemently criticized the Safavid rulers and the clergy for their animosity towards the Ottomans. Although he describes the Ottoman rulers as unjust and corrupt (fasid), at the same time he regards the Safavid movement as a betrayal of the whole Islamic Ummat. In his view the Safavids should have supported the Ottomans in their struggle against western imperialism, because the Ottomans had united the Islamic Ummat as a whole. He says :

"During the 16th and 17th centuries Iran was a crucial region from the point of view of political development. The whole world was divided into two great powers: the Christian power (of the West) and Islamic power (of the East). The centre of official power of Islam was in the hands of the Ottomans. The Christian Western regimes were coming closer to each other and were uniting against the Islamic empire as the Islamic forces i.e. (the Ottoman empire) posed a continuous threat to the European regimes. Greece, which at that time was the centre of ancient European culture, was now under the control of the Ottomans. The whole eastern Europe was conquered by the Muslim soldiers. The Islamic power was a new force in the Mediterranean which was under the direct control of the Ottomans, from where they posed a serious threat to the Italian and other West European powers.

The Ottoman empire had united the different rulers and nations into one political unit under the banner of Islam. The Ottoman regime was no doubt a corrupt regime (fasid); it never possessed the characteristics of an Islamic state (Hukumat-i-Islam), but they should have received moral support from the entire Islamic world on account of their war against Western Imperialism .... At a time when the Ottomans were engaged in fighting against the Western imperialism which was bent upon to plunder the whole Islamic world, our animosity (the Shi'i or the Safavid animosity) towards the Ottomans had an adverse effect for the Ummat .... If we had looked at them as an anti-Imperialist power our animosity should have been changed. From this point of view I wish if Salahuddin were reborn in Palestine, who may even be anti-Shia or Khalid b. Walid would have been reborn to eliminate the Romans"<sup>16</sup>

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16 Ibid., pp. 49 - 51.



For Ali Shariati there is no difference between Sunnism and Shi'ism as far as their fundamental beliefs are concerned. Both of them are the parts of one Ummat. As a great champion of Shia-Sunni unity, he felt it necessary to underrate the differences that separate the two communities from each other. Thus, he made every effort to prove that such differences are nominal and could be overcome for the sake of the unity of the Ummat. It was in this context that he defined his concept of Ummat.

"Ummat is a community of individuals who have a common philosophy, common beliefs, common religion and common path; they should not only share in their common thoughts but also in their way of life .... It is an ideological community. Its members may belong to any race, tribe or territory, but they think in one direction and have a common Faith"<sup>17</sup>

Rejecting the modern concept of nationhood based on language, race or territory as against the concept of Islamic Ummah, he writes :

"The ideal Islamic community is not a group based on the concept of one nation or society composed of those peoples having common language, customs, race or history. Nor it is a society composed of individuals having a common form of livelihood, work or profession"<sup>18</sup>

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p. 62. 17 Ali Shariati, Jami'a Shanas-i-Ummat va Imamah (n.p., n.d.)

18 Ibid., p. 71.

Therefore, according to Shariati such conceptions as Iranianism, Arabism or Turkism have no place in Islam. He says that since nationalism itself is a kind of racism, it is quite different from a society which is based on ideology of Islam :

"Nationalism is a territorial concept based on racism which is against the concept of the Ummah based on ideology. It will slater the Ummah into pieces. As during the First World War Western imperialism by infusing the spirit of nationalism did away with the temporal forces of Islam, similarly it broke the universal Islamic Caliphate into pieces with one stroke of the sword nationalism ....

In the twentieth century, suddenly certain panmovements emerged in Islamic caliphate: Pan-Arabism, Pan-Turkism, and afterwards - Pan-Iraqism (based on Iraq of the past four five thousand years: Babul, Suomer and Akuad), Pan-Coptism (unity of the Copts as against the Arabs of Egypt), and Pan-Barbarism (Unity of Barber as against the Arabs in Algeria). Each of these attempted to connect their historical and cultural origins with the pre-Islamic periods .... Even the Arabs traced the origins of their culture on the poetry of the Jahiliyya period, civilizations of Yemen, 'Aad and Thamud and the vaunt of Umayyad period. Other nations, especially the Iranians also belong to this category"<sup>19</sup>

In Shariati's view Islam and shi'ism are synonymous terms. The differences lie in approach only. Shi'ism is neither a religion nor a sect apart from Islam; it is an approach towards understanding Islam like many other approaches such as Sunnism which is also an approach. He says :

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<sup>19</sup> Ali Shariat, Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi, pp. 131 - 132.

"There may be some differences in religious practices between the Sunni and the Shia. It is not upto me to decide that shiism is a sect (firqa) or a religion (mazhab). It is also not upto me to define Shiism as a juridical school (maktab-i-fiqhi) as there are other schools of jurisprudence, e.g. Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i or Hanbali. I do not believe that Shiism is an ideology (maktab-i-I'teqadi) as distinct from Islam. In my opinion Islam and Shiism are synonymous (mutaradif). If Shiism begins with Tauhid; its history begins with Adam. Its mission begins with Ibrahim through Hossein to the last of the Imams. In a word, Shiism is "an approach in understanding Islam" (Yek Nau fahmeedan-i-Islam).<sup>20</sup>

Emphasizing that Shiism is nothing but a particular point of view perceivingsome of the texts of Islam in a particular way, he says that Shiism may be considered as an adjective to Islam i.e. Shii Islam (Islam-i-Shii ). He says that all the Muslims are brothers. All of us believe in Islamism (Aslat-i-Islam). However we differ in understanding Islam. Shia may perceive Islam in one way while the non-Shia may perceive it in <sup>on</sup> another way. But this is just an academic difference (Ikhtilafi-Ilmi). The differences between the Shiite and the Sunni beliefs are just like the differences between the Shiite theologian themselves who some time <sup>21</sup> differ in many basic issues.

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20 Ali Shariati, Shia Yek Hizb-i-Tamam (n.p., 1351 A.H. Solar), vol. II, pp. 17 - 18.

21 Cf. Ibid., vol II, pp. 18 - 19.

He further says that Shiism is nothing but a party (Hizb) within the framework of a large Islamic community. It has a fixed programme, strategy, mission, slogan, outlook and tradition. In his book Shia Yeth Hazb-i-Taman, he has discussed all these points in detail :

"Shiism is a perfect party (Hizb-i-Taman). It is a party which, on the one hand, represents the genuine principles and values of Abrahamic religion (Millat-i-Ibrahim), and on the other hand, it is an ideal response for an intellectual (Roushanfikir) to realize his responsibilities in leading human being.

In short, Shiism is the manifestation of Islam in the form of a party which possesses a particular world-view, ideological structure, aims and objectives, mission and responsibility, philosophy and history, slogan, direction, political and social outlook, economic principles, leadership, tradition of struggle, organization and strategy".<sup>22</sup>

"By party I mean an ideology and by describing Shiism as a party I mean the ideology of Islam in the form of a Shi philosophy (Beenish-i-Tashayyu) which fulfils the need of all the intellectuals of the world. Its members are the committed Shia people who are aware of their social responsibilities. They perceive Shiism as the most progressive wing of Islam and its philosophy as most human based on justice and freedom .... In other words it is the party which fights for the rights of the ruled".<sup>23</sup>

According to Ali Shariati Shiism put special emphasis on two principles : (1) Adalat (justice) and (2) Imamat (leadership). In his view there are five basic principles of Islam or Shi Islam : (1) Tauhid

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. II, pp. 4 - 17.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., vol II, pp. 34 - 36.

(Unity of God), (2) Nubuvat (Prophecy), (3) Ma'ad (belief in Hereafter), (4) Adalat (Justice) and (5) Imamat (leadership of the society).<sup>24</sup>

Adalat is described by him as the main objective of the mission of Shiism.<sup>25</sup> He explains the concept of Adalat in the light of the Qur'anic verses.<sup>26</sup> Ali Shariati points out that in these verses the Islamic Ummah or the Shia Party (Hizb-i-Shia) is described as the responsible group of people (Giroh-i-Mutahid) who fights against the munkar (Mobareza alayah munkar).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., vol II p.18.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed discussion on the concept of Adalat by Ali Shariati see Ibid., vol.I pp. 62 - 87 and pp. 92 - 120.

<sup>26</sup> For example, 'Let there arise out of you a band of people, inviting to all that is good, enjoying what is right and for-bidding what is wrong' and 'You are the best of peoples evolved for mankind enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and believing in God' (Qur'an, 3 : 104 and 110).

<sup>27</sup> Some of the great munkarat of contemporary world is identified by Ali Shariati as International Imperialism, International zionism, old and new exploitation, despotism, racism, cultural imperialism and westernism (Gharabzadgi). Cf. Ali Shariati, Shia Yek Hizb-i-Tamam, vol. I p.80.

According to him Amr bil-Ma'aruf wa'l - Nahi An-al Munkar (Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) means responsibility towards the whole mankind (Masuliat-i-Jahani).<sup>28</sup>

According to Shariati all the differences in the Islamic community whether political or religious, owe their origins to the crisis of the succession of the Prophet in one way or the other. This controversy resulted in the Battles of Jamal and Siffin. After the Battle of Siffin when the monarchy of the Umayyads was established, a number of groups emerged within the Islamic community to fight against them whom they considered to be usurpers of the caliphate which belonged to the Ummah. One of the groups which actively supported Ali and his descendants was later crystalized as Shiism. Thus the emergence of Shiism, Shariati argues, was caused by a "no"<sup>29</sup> to any kind of injustice and was based on the call of Amr bi'l-Maruf va Nahi 'ani'l-Munkar. Shiism since then emerged as a force against the establishment. According to Ali Shariati, the oppressed and deprived people gathered around Ali and after him his son Hossein to fight for their rights. Ali, the first link in the chain of the imamate, fought during the last five years of his life as the leader and representative of the oppressed people.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Ali Shariati, op. cit., vol. 1 p.71.

29 Ali Shariati, Tashayya-i-Surkh, tr. by Habib Shirazi, Red Shiism (Tehran. 1979) p. 1.

30 Ali Shariati, Ali Maktab-i-Vahdat va Adalat (Europe, 1355, A.H. Solar ), p.19.

Thus, Shiism continued to work as a party for the cause of oppressed people for centuries. It was a revolutionary ideology until it was declared a state religion by the Safavid monarch Shah Ismail I in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its inner revolutionary spirit was exploited by the Safavid monarchs for their political vested interests. It was reduced to a political tool in the hands of the Safavid rulers who moulded it into a false ideology to enlist the support of the masses. In this way, writes Shariati, the religion which was fighting against the establishment became a part of the establishment itself, and the force which fought for the freedom of oppressed people became an instrument of oppression.<sup>31</sup> He quotes from the instances of history that whenever a progressive ideology got the official patronage it becomes the part of the establishment - or in other words becomes institution, of the government and loses its spirit and enthusiasm. He further says Islam itself was a revolutionary movement until it became an official ideology and it was institutionalized in the form of Caliphate the same thing happened to Shiism. It changed from a Iman-i-Mutaharrik to Iman-i-Mutahajjar.<sup>32</sup> Says he :

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31 Ali Shariati, Shia Yek Hizb-i-Tamam, p.56.

32 Ali Shariati, Tashayyu-i-Alavi ya Tashayyu-i-Safavi, p.42.

"Shiism witnessed two stages which are completely distinct from each other. In Qarn-i-Awwal it was the manifestation of "Islam the movement" against "Islam the institution" (Sunnism) upto the first Safavids. This was the stage of revolution and movement is Shiism. But after the Safavids, Shiism transformed itself from a movement (Harkat) into an institution (Nizam)."<sup>33</sup>

According to Ali Shariati, the official clergy during the Safavids joined hands with the monarchs to evolve a whole new Shiite theology and the "Tasbeeh of the Mulla and the sword of the king became one".<sup>34</sup> Thus the whole concept of Shiism was distorted by the clergy. They innovated a number of practices that could isolate the Shia from the rest of the Muslim world. For example, it became a common practice to abuse the first three Caliphs in the sermons of the Friday prayers. Public cursing known as Tabarra was made compulsory during the mourning processions. The mourning procession was itself an innovation introduced in Islam like the practice of inflicting injury upon body and Taziadari<sup>35</sup> Shariati thinks that most of these practices were borrowed from the Christian West such as the practice of inflecting injuries upon body<sup>36</sup> which was prevalent among the Christians of the Eastern Europe.

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33 Ibid., p. 46.

34 Ibid., p. 36.

35 Ibid., pp. 206 - 207.

36 Cf. Ibid., pp. 204 - 211.



Moreover, the fundamental concepts of Shiism also distorted by the Safavid especially the concepts of Imamat and Adalat. To show how the concepts of Imam and Imamat were distorted, Shariati has quoted a number of the Shiite sources of the Safavid period such as passages from Javahar al-Valaya and Behar al-Anvar.<sup>37</sup> He points out that in these sources Imams are described as the ones who receive revelation (Wahy); they do not have shadow, they never sleep, they are supposed to be given power to create and govern the universe etc. Ali Shariati says that the status of Imams in these sources has been exalted to that of God. They have been ascribed with those divine powers which exclusively belong to God. According to him these concepts are against the genuine Shiite beliefs.

Ali Shariati defines Imamat as the leadership of man which is

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37 Cf. Ibid., pp. 173 - 185.

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the fundamental need of the society . Although he believes that the twelve Imams were appointed by God on account of their relative merit

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for leadership of the community on any hereditary principles, he refused

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38 Ali Shariati, Jamia Shinasi-i-Ummat va Imamat, p. 37.

It is a fundamental proposition of Shiite doctrine that there must be an Imam in every age and society. Every believer has to recognize him. Even the belief of a person is incomplete if he does not recognize the Imam of his age. Shariati has explained this phenomenon as a 'sociological inevitability'. There is a saying of Imam Ali in this regard : "He who died without recognizing the Imam, dies as an unbeliever" (Muhammad b. Yaqub Al-Kulayni al Razi, Al-Kafi fi Ilm al-Din, (Tehran, 1379 A.H.) vol. VIII p. 146).

As there had been only twelve Imams and the last Imam is supposed to be in occultation (Ghaybat), their duties and functions are the matter of concern for the substitutes (Qa'im Muqam) or the Na'ib-e-Imam. The history of post imamate period is divided into two parts. One is Ghaybat-i-Sughra (lesser occultation) and the other is Ghaybat-i-Kubra (Greater occultation). After the twelfth Imam went into Ghaybat in 847 A.D., he was accessible to some peoples who were called vakils. They were supposed to be representing the Imam-i-Ghayab. This period upto the death of the last vakil in 940 A.D. formed the first kind of occultation. After this the burden of guidance of society is supposed to have abruptly come on the shoulders of Ulama who find legitimacy from the Imam -i-Ghayab in his absence. The period from the death of the last vakil upto the re-appearance of Imam-i-Mehdi in the end of the world is called greater occultation. Cf. Ali Shariati Intezar-i- Mazhab-i-I'teraz, pp. 4 - 8

39 Ali Shariati, Tarikh Shinakht-i-Adyan (n.p., n.d.), p. 342.

to ascribe any extra-human qualities to them. He holds that the Imams were all human beings; they lived in human society, had physical structure, behaved like human beings and did not possess any attribute which was beyond human nature. According to him an "Imam is a 'superman' (Insan-i-Mafuq), and not a 'meta-human' (Mafuq-i-Insan) who belongs to a different species".<sup>40</sup> He also believed in occultation<sup>41</sup> of the last Imam.

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<sup>40</sup> Ali Shariati, Jamia-i-Shinasi-i-Ummat Imam, p.102.

<sup>41</sup> According to Ali Shariati, there are three groups of opinion about the occultation of the last Imam. One is the group of the traditional theologians who take the belief as it is and do not try to explain it by any scientific notions. The second group is of those who are educated in the West; they reject this concept totally. The third group comprises those religious scholars who are educated in the West but are firm also in their faith. They try to prove the notion of occultation on scientific grounds. Ali Shariati finds himself in this group, but knowing the limitations of the arguments, he evades discussion. Replying to a question whether he believed that a person can have an unlimited life, he said : "Let us pay our attentions to more important problems of life instead of devoting our minds and thoughts to these abstract philosophical questions". Cf. Ali Shariati, Intizar-i-Mazhab-i-teraz, p. 17.

Ali Shariati gives his own view of the imamat in the following words :-

"... The Prophet of Islam had to perform two functions in life; one was the function of Nubuwat (prophecy), and the other was the function of imamat (leadership for guidance). The first of the two functions - Nubuwat was completed by him in his life time. That is why he is known as the seal of the prophets.

However, the function of the building of the society was not completed in his life time. This task could have not been completed in a short period of twenty three years of prophecy. Therefore, it required continuous effort of the coming generations - the generations of the twelve imams."<sup>42</sup>

Ali Shariati in his book Tashayyu-i-Alavi Tashayyu-i-Safavi had drawn the distinction between the two types of Shiism in following words :

<u>Alavid Shiism</u>	:	<u>Safavid Shiism</u>
1. Shiism of Knowledge ( <u>Shinskht</u> )	:	Shiism of ignorance ( <u>Jahl</u> )
2. Shiism of tradition ( <u>Sunnat</u> )	:	Shiism of Innovation ( <u>Bid'at</u> )
3. Shiism of justice ( <u>Adl</u> ) in the Society and the world	:	Shiism of justice ( <u>Adl</u> ) in life hereafter

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<sup>42</sup> Ali Shariati, Shia Hizb-e-Tamam, vol. II, p.70.

4. Shiism of cause (Rasm) : Shiism of name (Ism)
5. Shiism of following : Shiism of praising Ali  
Ali (Pairvi-i-Ali) (Satish-i-Ali)
6. Shiism of interpretation : Shiism of stagnation (Jamud)  
(Ijtihad)
7. Shiism of responsibility : Shiism of no responsibility  
(Masuliat) (Tateel-i-Masuliat)
8. Shiism of freedom (Azadi): Shiism of slavery ( Upudiat)
9. Shiism of revolution of : Shiism of disaster of Karbala  
Karbala (Inqilab-i-Karbala) (Faj<sup>2</sup>-i-Karbala)
10. Shiism of Shahadat : Shiism of death
11. Shiism of Perfection : Shiism of alteration
12. Shiism of Unity of God : Shiism of Polytheism (Shirk)  
(Tauhid)
13. Shiism of free will : Shiism of predestination  
(Ikhtiar) (Jabr)
14. Shiism of friendship of : Shiism of mourning of  
Hossein (Yare-i-Hossein) Hossein (Girya-i-Hossein)
15. Shiism of humanism : Shiism of nationalism  
(Insaniat .) (Qaumiat)

16. Shiism of Imamat of Ali : Shiism of monarchy of the Safavids
17. Shiism of positive : Shiism of negative waiting  
waiting (Intezar-i-Musbat) (Intezar-i-Manfi)
18. Shiism of struggle : Shiism of inactivity<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ali Shariati, Tashayyu-i-Alavi va Tashayyu-i-Safavi, pp. 324 - 32

### CONCLUSION

Ali Shariati was well versed in traditional Islamic learning as well as modern European Thoughts. He had acquired profound knowledge of history, sociology, religion and philosophy. He was especially interested in sociological studies and he applied this knowledge of sociology to the study of the Qur'an and Tradition. He was a prolific writer and a powerful orator.

In the field of politics he had a strong feeling of hatred for western imperialism and the despotic regime of the Shah. In this regard he is comparable to Sayyid Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1838-1897 A.D.) who was a great source of inspiration for him. The chief aim of Ali Shariati was to combat imperialism and despotism, on the one hand and to create consciousness for freedom and self-determination among his compatriots, on the other hand. As a Muslim modernist he was convinced that Islam plays a crucial role on the minds of the people. He therefore

used religion as a means to create social and political awareness among the people. He condemned retrograde Shiite Islam, particularly, the institution of clergy which he regarded an innovation in Islam. Ali Shariati's effort was to equate Shiism with Islam. He interpreted Islam as an ideology than a culture or a civilization - an ideology that generates activism and revolution. However, he was bitterly criticized on account of his non-conformism by the strong group of the Iranian clergy who made him a target of attack. He was accused of not being a devout. On account of his liberal views on Islam they charged him of being a 'sunni' or an 'osmani' or a 'wahabi'. He was also not liked by the westernized section of the Iranian intelligentsia who regarded him a conservative Muslim. No doubt Ali Shariati was a modernist and a reformer. He therefore calls himself a 'Roushanfikir' (the enlightened one) - a term which he uses for those who are aware ( agah ) of their responsibilities to their society and people.

As a sociologist he was especially concerned with the problem of the alienation of the Muslim man. He found that the Islamic societies of his time suffered from the worst kind of alienation - an alienation from their culture and civilization created by the rapid process of westernization. He therefore urged his



co-religionists to adhere to their Islamic heritage. He was also very much influenced by the socialists, existentialists and orientalist - especially the writings of Marx, Sartre, Fanon and Massignon.

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